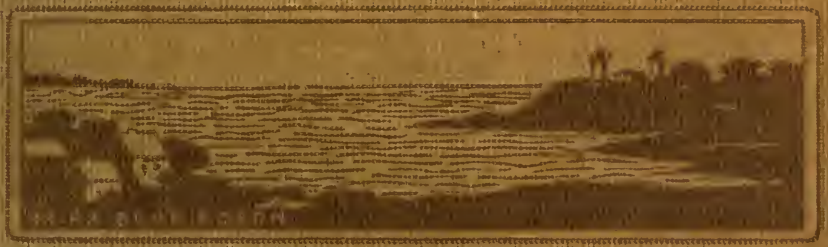
CAPE COD BALLADS



BY JOE LINCOLN

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LOS ANGELES

"He's a hero born and bred,
but it hasn't swelled his head."

CAPE COD BALLADS

AND OTHER VERSE

BY JOE LINCOLN

(JOSEPH CROSBY LINCOLN)

WITH DRAWINGS BY EDWARD W. KEMBLE

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To My Wife

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

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A FRIEND has objected to the title of this book on the ground that, as many of the characters and scenes described are to be found in almost any coast village of the United States, the title might, with equal fitness, be "New Jersey Ballads," or "Long Island Ballads," or something similar.

The answer to this is, simply, that while "School-committee Men" and "Village Oracles" are, doubtless, pretty much alike throughout Yankeedom, the particular specimens here dealt with were individuals whom the author knew in his boyhood "down on the Cape." So, "Cape Cod Ballads" it is.

The verses in this collection originally appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, *The Youth's Companion*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Puck*, *Types*, *The League of American Wheelmen Bulletin*, and the publications of the American Press Association. Thanks are due to the editors of these periodicals for their courteous permission to reprint.

J. C. L.

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CAPE COD BALLADS

THE COD-FISHER

WHERE leap the long Atlantic swells
In foam-streaked stretch of hill and dale,
Where shrill the north-wind demon yells,
And flings the spindrift down the gale;
Where, beaten 'gainst the bending mast,
The frozen raindrop clings and cleaves,
With steadfast front for calm or blast
His battered schooner rocks and heaves.

To some the gain, to some the loss,
To each the chance, the risk, the fight:
For men must die that men may live—
Lord, may we steer our course aright.

The dripping deck beneath him reels,
The flooded scuppers spout the brine;
He heeds them not, he only feels
The tugging of a tightened line.

The grim white sea-fog o'er him throws
Its clammy curtain, damp and cold;
He minds it not—his work he knows,
'T is but to fill an empty hold.

Oft, driven through the night's blind wrack,
He feels the dread berg's ghastly breath,
Or hears draw nigh through walls of black
A throbbing engine chanting death;
But with a calm, unwrinkled brow
He fronts them, grim and undismayed,
For storm and ice and liner's bow—
These are but chances of the trade.

Yet well he knows—where'er it be,
On low Cape Cod or bluff Cape Ann—
With straining eyes that search the sea
A watching woman waits her man:
He knows it, and his love is deep,
But work is work, and bread is bread,
And though men drown and women weep
The hungry thousands must be fed.

To some the gain, to some the loss,
To each his chance, the game with Fate:
For men must die that men may live—
Dear Lord, be kind to those who wait.

THE SONG OF THE SEA

Oh, the song of the Sea—
The wonderful song of the Sea!
Like the far-off hum of a throbbing drum
It steals through the night to me:
And my fancy wanders free
To a little seaport town,
And a spot I knew, where the roses grew
By a cottage small and brown;
And a child strayed up and down
O'er hillock and beach and lea,
And crept at dark to his bed, to hark
To the wonderful song of the Sea.

Oh, the song of the Sea—
The mystical song of the Sea!
What strains of joy to a dreaming boy
That music was wont to be!
And the night-wind through the tree
Was a perfumed breath that told
Of the spicy gales that filled the sails
Where the tropic billows rolled
And the rovers hid their gold
By the lone palm on the key,—
But the whispering wave their secret gave
In the mystical song of the Sea.

Oh, the song of the Sea—
The beautiful song of the Sea!
The mighty note from the ocean's throat,
The laugh of the wind in glee!
And swift as the ripples flee
With the surges down the shore,
It bears me back, o'er life's long track,
To home and its love once more.
I stand at the open door,
Dear mother, again with thee,
And hear afar on the booming bar
The beautiful song of the Sea.

THE WIND'S SONG

Oh, the wild November wind,
How it blew!
How the dead leaves rasped and rustled,
Soared and sank and buzzed and bustled
As they flew;
While above the empty square,
Seeming skeletons in air,
Battered branches, brown and bare,
Gauntly grinned;
And the frightened dust-clouds, flying,
Heard the calling and the crying
Of the wind,—
The wild November wind.

Oh, the wild November wind,
How it screamed!
How it moaned and mocked and muttered
At the cottage window, shuttered,
Whence there streamed
Fitful flecks of firelight mild:
And within, a mother smiled,
Singing softly to her child
As there dinned
Round the gabled roof and rafter
Long and loud the shout and laughter
Of the wind,—
The wild November wind.

Oh, the wild November wind,
How it rang
Through the rigging of a vessel
Rocking where the great waves wrestle!
And it sang,
Light and low, that mother's song;
And the master, staunch and strong,
Heard the sweet strain drift along—
Softened, thinned,—
Heard the tightened cordage ringing
Till it seemed a loved voice singing
In the wind,—
The wild November wind.

THE LIFE-SAVER

(Dedicated to the Men in the United States Life-saving Service.)

When the Lord breathes his wrath above the bosom
of the waters,
When the rollers are a-poundin' on the shore,
When the mariner 's a-thinkin' of his wife and sons
and daughters,
And the little home he 'll, maybe, see no more;
When the bars are white and yeasty and the shoals are
all a-frothin',
When the wild no'theaster 's cuttin' like a knife;
Through the seethin' roar and screech he 's patrollin'
on the beach,—
The Gov'ment's hired man fer savin' life.

He 's strugglin' with the gusts that strike and bruise
him like a hammer,
He 's fightin' sand that stings like swarmin' bees,
He 's list'nin' through the whirlwind and the thunder
and the clamor—
A-list'nin' fer the signal from the seas;

He 's breakin' ribs and muscles launchin' life-boats in the surges,
He 's drippin' wet and chilled in every bone,
He 's bringin' men from death back ter flesh and blood and breath,
And he never stops ter think about his own;

He 's a-pullin' at an oar that is freezin' to his fingers,
He 's a-clingin' in the riggin' of a wreck,
He knows destruction 's nearer every minute that he lingers,
But it do' n't appear ter worry him a speck:
He 's draggin' draggled corpses from the clutches of the combers—
The kind of job a common chap would shirk—
But he takes 'em from the wave and he fits 'em fer the grave,
And he thinks it 's all included in his work.

He is rigger, rower, swimmer, sailor, doctor, undertaker,
And he 's good at every one of 'em the same:
And he risks his life fer others in the quicksand and the breaker,
And a thousand wives and mothers bless his name.
He 's an angel dressed in oilskins, he 's a saint in a "sou'wester",
He 's as plucky as they make, or ever can;
He 's a hero born and bred, but it has n't swelled his head,
And he 's jest the U. S. Gov'ment's hired man.

"THE EVENIN' HYMN"

When the hot summer daylight is dyin',
And the mist through the valley has rolled,
And the soft velvet clouds ter the west'ard
Are purple with trimmin's of gold,—
Then, down in the medder-grass, dusky,
The crickets chirp out from each nook,
And the frogs with their voices so husky
Jine in from the marsh and the brook.

The chorus grows louder and deeper,
An owl sends a hoot from the hill,
The leaves on the elm-trees are rustlin',
A whippoorwill calls by the mill.
Where swamp honeysuckles are bloomin'
The breeze scatters sweets on the night,
Like incense the evenin' perfumin',
With fireflies fer candles alight.

And the noise of the frogs and the crickets
And the birds and the breeze are ter me
Lots better than high-toned supraners,
Although they do n't get to "high C";
And the church, with its grand painted skylight,
Seems cramped and forbiddin' and grim
'Side of my old front porch in the twilight
When God's choir sings its "Evenin' Hymn."

THE MEADOW ROAD

Just a simple little picture of a sunny country road
Leading down beside the ocean's pebbly shore,
Where a pair of patient oxen slowly drag their heavy load,
And a barefoot urchin trudges on before:
Yet I'm dreaming o'er it, smiling, and my thoughts are far away
'Mid the glorious summer sunshine long ago,
And once more a happy, careless boy, in memory I stray
Down a little country road I used to know.

I hear the voice of "Father" as he drives the lumbering steers,
And the pigeons coo and flutter on the shed,
While all the simple, homelike sounds come whispering to my ears,
And the cloudless sky of June is overhead;
And again the yoke is creaking as the oxen swing and sway,
The old cart rattles loudly as it jars,
Then we pass beneath the elm trees where the robin's song is gay,
And go out beyond the garden through the bars;

Down the lane, behind the orchard where the wild rose blushes sweet,
Through the pasture, past the spring beside the brook
Where the clover blossoms press their dewy kisses on my feet
And the honeysuckle scents each shady nook;
By the meadow and the bushes, where the blackbirds build their nests,
Up the hill, beneath the shadow of the pine,
Till the breath of Ocean meets us, dancing o'er his sparkling crests,
And our faces feel the tingling of the brine.

And my heart leaps gayly upward, like the foam upon the sea,
As I watch the breakers tumbling with a roar,
And the ships that dot the azure seem to wave a hail to me,
And to beckon to a wondrous, far-off shore.

. . . . . .

Just a simple little picture, yet its charm is o'er me still,
And again my boyish spirit seems to glow,
And once more a barefoot urchin am I wandering at will
Down that little country road I used to know.

THE BULLFROG SERENADE

When the toil of day is over
And the dew is on the clover,
And the night-hawk whirls in circles overhead;
When the cow-bells melt and mingle
In a softened, silver jingle,
And the old hen calls the chickens in to bed;
When the marshy meadows glimmer
With a misty, purple shimmer,

And the twilight flush is changing into shade;
When the firefly lamps are burning
And the dusk to dark is turning,—
Then the bullfrogs chant their evening serenade:

"Deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep!
Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!*"

First the little chaps begin it,
Raise their high-pitched voices in it,
And the shrill soprano piping sets the pace;
Then the others join the singing
Till the echoes soon are ringing
With the big green-coated leader's double-bass.
All the lilies are a-quiver,
And the grasses by the river
Feel the mighty chorus shaking every blade,
While the dewy rushes glisten
As they bend their heads to listen
To the bullfrogs' summer evening serenade:

"Deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep!
Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!*"

And the melody they 're tuning
Has the sweet and sleepy crooning
That the mother hums the baby at her breast,
Till the world forgets its sorrow
And the cares that haunt the morrow,
And is sinking, hushed and happy, to its rest.

Sometimes bubbling o'er with gladness,
Sometimes soft and full of sadness,
Through my dreaming rings the music they have played,
And my memory's dearest treasures
Have been fitted to the measures
Of the bullfrogs' summer evening serenade:

"Deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep, deep-deep!
Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!* Better go *'round!*"

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

From the window of the chapel softly sounds an organ's note,
Through the wintry Sabbath gloaming drifting shreds of music float,
And the quiet and the firelight and the sweetly solemn tunes
Bear me, dreaming, back to boyhood and its Sunday afternoons:

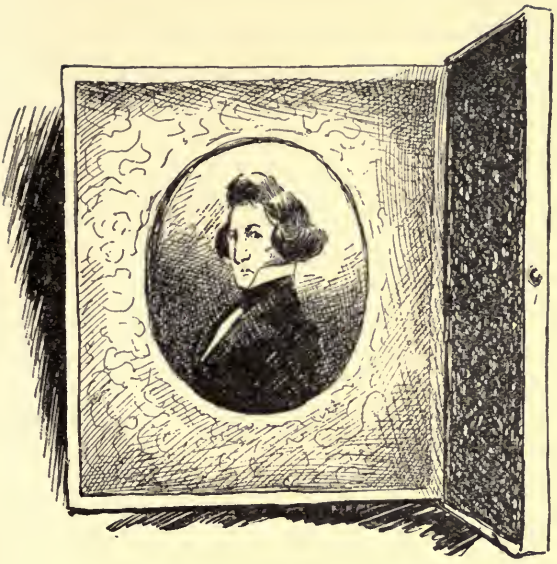
When we gathered in the parlor, in the parlor stiff and grand,
Where the haircloth chairs and sofas stood arrayed, a gloomy band,

Where each queer oil portrait watched us with a countenance of wood,
And the shells upon the what-not in a dustless splendor stood.

Then the quaint old parlor organ with the quaver in its tongue,
Seemed to tremble in its fervor as the sacred songs were sung,
As we sang the homely anthems, sang the glad revival hymns
Of the glory of the story and the light no sorrow dims.

While the dusk grew ever deeper and the evening settled down,
And the lamp-lit windows twinkled in the drowsy little town,
Old and young we sang the chorus and the echoes told it o'er
In the dear familiar voices, hushed or scattered evermore.

From the window of the chapel faint and low the music dies,
And the picture in the firelight fades before my tear-dimmed eyes,
But my wistful fancy, listening, hears the night-wind hum the tunes
That we sang there in the parlor on those Sunday afternoons.



THE OLD DAGUERREOTYPES

Up in the attic I found them, locked in the cedar chest,
Where the flowered gowns lie folded, which once were brave as the best;
And like the queer old jackets and the waistcoats gay with stripes,
They tell of a worn-out fashion—these old daguerreotypes.

Quaint little folding cases fastened with tiny hook,
Seemingly made to tempt one to lift up the latch and look;
Linings of purple velvet, odd little frames of gold,
Circling the faded faces brought from the days of old.

Grandpa and grandma, taken ever so long ago,
Grandma's bonnet a marvel, grandpa's collar a show,
Mother, a tiny toddler, with rings on her baby hands
Painted—lest none should notice—in glittering, gilded bands.

Aunts and uncles and cousins, a starchy and stiff array,
Lovers and brides, then blooming,—now so wrinkled and gray:
Out through the misty glasses they gaze at me, sitting here
Opening the quaint old cases with a smile that is half a tear.

I will smile no more, little pictures, for heartless it was, in truth,
To drag to the cruel daylight these ghosts of a vanished youth;
Go back to your cedar chamber, your gowns and your lavender,
And dream, 'mid their bygone graces, of the wonderful days that were.

THE BEST SPARE ROOM

I REMEMBER, when a youngster, all the happy hours I spent
When to visit Uncle Hiram in the country oft I went;
And the pleasant recollection still in memory has a charm
Of my boyish romps and rambles round the dear old-fashioned farm.
But at night all joyous fancies from my youthful bosom crept,
For I knew they 'd surely put me where the "comp'ny" always slept,
And my spirit sank within me, as upon it fell the gloom
And the vast and lonely grandeur of the best spare room.

Ah, the weary waste of pillow where I laid my lonely head!
Sinking, like a shipwrecked sailor, in a patchwork sea of bed,
While the moonlight through the casement cast a grim and ghastly glare
O'er the stiff and stately presence of each dismal hair-cloth chair;

And it touched the mantel's splendor, where the wax
fruit used to be,
And the alabaster image Uncle Josh brought home
from sea;
While the breeze that shook the curtains spread a
musty, faint perfume
And a subtle scent of camphor through the best spare
room.

Round the walls were hung the pictures of the dear
ones passed away,
"Uncle Si and A'nt Lurany," taken on their wedding
day;
Cousin Ruth, who died at twenty, in the corner had a
place
Near the wreath from Eben's coffin, dipped in wax
and in a case;
Grandpa Wilkins, done in color by some artist of the
town,
Ears askew and somewhat cross-eyed, but with fixed
and awful frown,
Seeming somehow to be waiting to enjoy the dreadful
doom
Of the frightened little sleeper in the best spare room.

Every rustle of the corn-husks in the mattress under-
neath
Was to me a ghostly whisper muttered through a
phantom's teeth,

And the mice behind the wainscot, as they scampered
round about,
Filled my soul with speechless horror when I 'd put
the candle out.
So I 'm deeply sympathetic when some story I have read
Of a victim buried living by his friends who thought
him dead ;
And I think I know his feelings in the cold and silent
tomb,
For I 've slept at Uncle Hiram's in the best spare room.

THE OLD CARRYALL

It 's ALONE in the dark of the old wagon-shed,
Where the spider-webs swing from the beams overhead,
And the sun, siftin' in through the dirt and the mold
Of the winder's dim pane, specks it over with gold.
Its curtains are tattered, its cushions are worn,
It 's a kind of a ghost of a carriage, forlorn,
And the dust from the roof settles down like a pall
On the sorrowin' shape of the old carryall.

It was built long ago, when the world seemed ter be
A heaven, jest made up for Mary and me,
And my mind wanders back to that first happy ride
When she sat beside me,—my beauty and bride.

Ah, them were the days when the village was new
And folks took time to live, as God meant 'em ter do;
And there 's many a huskin' and quiltin' and ball
That we drove to and back in the old carryall.

And here in the paint are the marks of the feet
Where a little form climbed ter the high-fashioned seat,
And soft baby fingers them curtains have swung,
And a curly head 's nestled the cushions among;
And then come the gloom of that black, bitter day
When "Thy will be done" looked so wicked ter say
As we drove to the grave, while the rain seemed to fall
Like the tears of the sky on the old carryall.

And so it has served us through sunshine and cloud,
Through fun'rals and weddin's, from bride-wreath ter
shroud;
It 's old and it 's rusty, it 's shaky and lame,
But I love every j'int of its rickety frame.
And it 's restin' at last, for its race has been run,
It 's lived out its life and its work has been done,
And I hope, in my soul, at the last trumpet call
I 'll have done mine as well as the old carryall.

OUR FIRST FIRE-CRACKERS

O you boys grown gray and bearded, you that used
ter chum with me
In that lazy little village down beside the tumblin'
sea,
When yer sniff the burnin' powder, when yer see the
banners fly,
Don't yer thoughts, like mine, go driftin' back to
Fourths long since gone by?
And, amongst them days of gladness, ain't there one
that stands alone,
When yer had yer first fire-crackers—jest one bunch,
but all yer own?

Don't yer 'member how yer envied bigger chaps their
fuss and noise,
'Cause yer Ma had said that crackers was n't good fer
little boys?
Do yer 'member how yer teased her, morn and eve and
noon and night,
And how all the world yelled "Glory!" when at last
she said yer might?

Do yer 'member how yer bought 'em, weeks and weeks
ahead of time,
After savin' all yer pennies till they footed up a dime?
Do yer 'member what they looked like? *I* can see 'em
plain as plain,
With a dragon on the package, grinnin' through a
fiery rain.

Do yer 'member how yer fired 'em, slow and careful, one by one?
Do' n't it seem like each was louder than the grandest sort of gun?
Can 't yer see the big, red flashes, if yer only shut yer eyes,
And jest smell the burnin' powder, sweeter 'n breaths from paradise?

O you boys, gray-haired and bearded, O you youngsters grown ter men,
We can 't buy them kind of crackers now, nor never shall again!
Fer the joys thet used ter glitter through the fizz and puff and crash,
Has, ter most of us, been deadened by the grindin' chink of cash;
But I 'd like ter ask yer, fellers, how much of yer hoarded gold
Would yer give if it could buy yer one glad Fourth like them of old?
How much would yer spend ter gain it—that light-hearted, joyous glow
That come with yer fust fire-crackers, when yer bought 'em long ago?

WHEN NATHAN LED THE CHOIR

I s'pose I hain't progressive, but I swan, it seems ter me
Religion is n't nigh so good as what it used ter be!
I go ter meetin' every week and rent my reg'lar pew,
But hain't a mite uplifted when the sarvices are through;
I take my orthodoxy straight, like Gran'pop did his rum,
(It never hurt him, neither, and a deacon, too, by gum!)
But now the preachin' 's mushy and the singin' 's lost its fire:
I 'd like ter hear old Parson Day, with Nathan leadin' choir.

I 'd like ter know who told these folks that all was perfect peace,
And glidin' inter heaven was as slick as meltin' grease;
Old Parson Day, I tell yer what, his sermons made yer *think!*
He 'd shake yer over Tophet till yer heard the cinders clink.
And then, when he 'd gin out the tune and Nate would take his stand
Afore the chosen singers, with the tunin'-fork in hand,

The meetin'-house jest held its breath, from cellar plum
ter spire,
And then bu'st forth in thunder-tones with Nathan
leadin' choir.

They didn't chime so pretty, p'r'aps, as does our new
quartette,
But all them folks was there ter sing, and done it, too,
you bet!
The basses they 'd be rollin' on, with faces swelled and
red,
And racin' the supraners, who was p'r'aps a bar ahead;
While Nate beat time with both his hands and worked
like drivin' plow,
With drops o' sweat a-standin' out upon his face and
brow;
And all the congregation felt that Heav'n was shorely
nigher
Whene'er they heerd the chorus sung with Nathan
leadin' choir.

Rube Swan was second tenor, and his pipes was kinder
cracked,
But Rube made up in loudness what in tune he might
have lacked;
But 'twas a leetle cur'us, though, for p'r'aps his voice
would balk,
And when he 'd fetch a high note give a most outrage-
ous squawk;

And Uncle Elkanah was deef and kind er 'd lose the run,
And keep on singin' loud and high when all the rest was done;
But, notwithstandin' all o' this, I think I 'd never tire
Of list'nin' ter the good old tunes with Nathan leadin' choir.

We 've got a brand-new organ now, and singers—only four—
But, land! we pay 'em cash enough ter fee a hundred more;
They sing newfangled tunes and things that some folks think are sweet,
But don't appeal ter me no more 'n a fish-horn on the street.
I 'd like once more ter go ter church and watch old Nathan wave
His tunin'-fork above the crowd and lead the glorious stave;
I 'd like ter hear old Parson Day jest knock the sinners higher,
And then set back and hear a hymn with Nathan leadin' choir.

HEZEKIAH'S ART

My son Hezekiah 's a painter; yes, that 's the purfession he 's at;
An artist, I mean,—course he ain't a whitewasher or nothin' like that.
At home he was always a-drawin' and shirkin' his work 'round the place,
And kept me continyerly jawin' or dressin' him down with a trace;
Till I says ter Mother, "Between us, this thing might 's well be understood;
Our Hez is jest simply a gen'us, and a gen'us is *never* no good;
He won't stop fer jawin's and dressin's; he 'll daub and he 'll draw all the while;
So he might as well have a few lessons, and learn how ter do it in style."

So I sold a slice of the wood-lot ter the folks at the summer hotel,
That fetched me some cash—quite a good lot—so now he 's been gone a long spell;
He 's got a room up ter the City, an' calls it a name that is queer—
I ain't up in French, more 's the pity—but something that 's like "attyleer."

I went up last month on a visit, and blamed if that
place wa' n't a sight!
The fourteenth or fifteenth—which is it?—well, any-
how, it 's the top flight;
I would n't have b'lieved he could be there, way up on
that breath-takin' floor,
If 't wa' n't fer the sign that I see there—"H. Lafayette
Boggs"—on the door.

That room was a wonder fer certain! The floor was
all paint-spots and dirt,
Each window was hung with a curtain, striped gay as
a calico shirt;
The walls was jest like a museum, all statoos and flim-
flam and gush
And picters—good land! when I see 'em I jest had ter
turn 'round and blush;
And Hez! he looked like a gorilla,—a leetle round
hat on his head,
And hair that would stuff a big piller, and necktie
blue, yeller, and red;
I swan, he did look like a daisy! I tell yer, it went
ter my heart,
'Cause, course I supposed he was crazy, until he ex-
plained it was ART.

This Art, it does stagger a feller that ain't got a con-
nerseer's view,
Fer trees by its teachin' is yeller, and cows is a shade
of sky-blue.

"I swan, he did look
like a daisy!"

Hez says that ter paint 'em like natur' is common and tawdry and vile;
He says it 's a plaguey sight greater to do 'em "impressionist style."
He done me my portrait, and, reely, my nose is a ultrymarine,
My whiskers is purple and steely, and both of my cheeks is light green.
When Mother first viewed it she fainted—she ain't up in Art, do n't yer see?
And she had a notion 't was painted when Hez had been off on a spree.

We used ter think Hezzy would shame us by bein' no good anyhow,
But he says some day he 'll be famous, so we 're sort er proud of him, now.
He says that the name he 's a-makin' shall ring in Fame's thunderin' tone;
He says that earth's dross he 's forsaken, he 's livin' fer Art's sake alone.
That 's nice, but what seems ter me funny, and what I can 't get through my head
Is why he keeps writin' fer money and can 't seem ter earn nary red.
I 've been sort er thinkin' it over, and seems ter me, certain enough,
That livin' *for* Art is just clover, but that livin' *on* it is tough.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL PICNIC

Oh! the horns are all a-tootin' as we rattle through the town,
And we fellers are a-hootin' and a-jumpin' up and down,
And the girls are all a-gigglin' and a-tryin' ter be smart,
With their braided pig-tails wigglin' at the joltin' of the cart;
There 's the teachers all a-beamin', rigged up in their Sunday clothes,
And the parson's specs a-gleamin' like two moons acrost his nose,
And the sup'rintendent lookin' mighty dignerfied and cool,
And a-bossin' of the picnic of the Baptist Sunday-school.

Everybody 's got their basket brimmin' full of things ter eat,
And I 've got one—if yer ask it—that is purty hard ter beat,—
'Cept that Sis put in some pound-cake that she made herself alone,
And I bet yer never found cake that was quite so much like stone.

There 'll be quarts of sass'parilla; yes, and "lemmo" in a tub;
There 'll be ice-cream—it 's vernilla—and all kinds of fancy grub;
And they 're sure ter spread the table on the ground beside the spring,
So 's the ants and hoppergrasses can just waltz on everything.

Then the girls they 'll be a-yippin', 'cause a bug is in the cream;
And a "daddy-long-legs" skippin' round the butter makes 'em scream;
And a fuzzy caterpillar—jest the littlest kind they make—
Sets 'em holl'rin', "Kill her! kill her!" like as if it was a snake.
Then, when dinner-time is over and we boys have et enough,
Why, the big girls they 'll pick clover, or make wreaths of leaves and stuff;
And the big chaps they 'll set 'round 'em, lookin' soft as ever wuz,
Talkin' gush and actin' silly, same as that kind always does.

Then, we 'll ride home when it 's dark'nin' and the leaves are wet with dew,
And the lightnin'-bugs are sparklin' and the moon is shinin', too;

We 'll sing "Jingle bells" and "Sailin'," "Seein' Nelly home," and more;
And that one that 's slow and wailin', "Home ag'in from somethin' shore."
Then a feller 's awful sleepy and he kinder wants ter rest,
But the stuff he 's et feels creepy and like bricks piled on his chest;
And, perhaps, he dreams his stummick has been stepped on by a mule;
But it ain't: it 's jest the picnic of the Baptist Sunday-school!

"AUNT 'MANDY"

Our Aunt 'Mandy thinks that boys
Never ought ter make a noise,
Or go swimmin', or play ball,
Or have any fun at all;
Thinks a boy had ought ter be
Dressed up all the time, and she
Hollers jest as if she 's hurt
At the *littlest mite* er dirt
On a feller's hands or face,
Or his clothes, or any place.

Then at dinner-time she 's there,
Sayin', " Must n't kick the chair ! "
Or " Why *do n't* yer sit up straight ? "
" 'T ain't perlite to drum yer plate."
An' yer got ter eat as *slow*,
'Cause she 's dingin' at yer so.
Then, when Chris'mus comes, she brings
Nothin', only *useful* things:
Han'kershi'fs an' gloves an' ties,
Sunday stuff yer jest *despise*.

She 's a ole maid, all alone,
'Thout no children of her own,
An' I s'pose that makes her fuss
'Round our house a-bossin' us.
If she 'd had a boy, I bet,
'Tween her bossin' and her fret
She 'd a-killed him, jest about;
So God made her do without,
For he knew *no* boy could stay
With Aunt 'Mandy *every* day.

THE STORY-BOOK BOY

Oh, the story-book boy! he 's a wonderful youth,
A prodigy reeking with goodness and truth;
As brave as a lion, as wise as a sage,
And sharp as a razor, though twelve years of age.
His mother is good and she 's awfully poor,
But he says, "Do not fret, *I'll* provide for you, sure!"
And the hard grasping landlord, who comes to annoy,
Is braved to his teeth by the story-book boy.

Oh, the story-book boy! when he sees that young churl,
The Squire's spoiled son, kick the poor crippled girl,
He darts to the rescue as quick as he can,
And dusts the hard road with the cruel young man;
And when he is sought by the vengeful old Squire,
He withers the latter with tongue-lashing ire;
For the town might combine his young nerve to destroy,
And never once shake him—the story-book boy.

Oh, the story-book boy! when the Judge's dear child
Is dragged through the streets by a runaway wild,
Of course he 's on hand, and a "ten-strike" he makes,
For he stops the mad steed in a couple of "shakes";

"And with—ahem—er—
as I said before."

And he tells the glad Judge, who has wept on his hat,
"I did but my duty!" or something like that;
And the very best place in the Judge's employ
Is picked out at once for the story-book boy.

Oh, the story-book boy! all his troubles are o'er,
For he gets to be Judge in a year or two more;
And the wicked old landlord in poverty dies,
And the Squire's son drinks, and in gutters he lies;
But the girl whom he saved is our hero's fair bride,
And his old mother comes to their home to abide;
In silks and sealskins, she cries, in her joy:
"Thank Heaven, I'm Ma of a story-book boy!"

THE SCHOOL-COMMITTEE MAN

SOMETIMES when we 're in school, and it 's the afternoon
and late,
And kinder warm and sleepy, do n't yer know;
And p'r'aps a feller 's studyin' or writin' on his slate,
Or, maybe chewin' paper-balls to throw,
And teacher 's sort er lazy, too — why, then there 'll
come a knock
And everybody 'll brace up quick 's they can;

We boys and girls 'll set up straight, and teacher 'll
smooth her frock,
Because it 's him—the school-committee man.

He 'll walk in kinder stately-like and say, "How do,
Miss Brown?"
And teacher, she 'll talk sweet as choc'late cake;
And he 'll put on his specs and cough and pull his
eyebrows down
And look at us so hard 't would make yer shake.
We 'll read and spell, so 's he can hear, and speak a
piece or two,
While he sets there so dreadful grand and cool;
Then teacher 'll rap her desk and say, "Attention!"
soon 's we 're through,
And ask him, won't he please address the school.

He 'll git up kinder calm and slow, and blow his nose
real loud;
And put his hands behind beneath his coat,
Then kinder balance on his toes and look 'round sort er
proud
And give a big "Ahem!" ter clear his throat;
And then he 'll say: "Dear scholars, I am glad ter see
yer here,
A-drinkin'—er—the crystal fount of lore;
Here with your books, and—er—and—er—your
teacher kind and dear,
And with—ahem—er—as I said before."

We have ter listen awful hard ter every word of his
And watch him jest like kittens do a rat,
And laugh at every joke he makes, do n't care how old it is,
'Cause he can *boss the teacher*,—think of that!
I useter say, when I growed up I 'd be a circus chap
And drive two lions hitched up like a span;
But, honest, more I think of it, I b'lieve the bestest snap
Is jest ter be a school-committee man.

WASTED ENERGY

South Pokus is religious,—that 's the honest, livin' truth;
South Pokus folks are pious,—man and woman, maid and youth;
And they listen every Sunday, though it rains or snows or shines,
In their seven shabby churches, ter their seven poor divines,
Who dispense the balm and comfort that the thirstin' sperit needs,
By a-fittin' of the gospel ter their seven diff 'rent creeds,

Each one sure his road ter Heaven is the only sartin way,—
Fer South Pokus is religious, as I started off ter say.

Now the Pokus population is nine hundred, more or less,
Which, in one big congregation, would be quite a church, I guess,
And do lots of good, I reckon; but yer see it could n't be,—
Long 's one's tweedledum was diff'rent from the other's tweedledee.
So the Baptists they are Baptists, though the church is swamped in debt,
And the Orthodox is rigid, though expenses can't be met,
And the twenty Presbyterians 'll be Calvinists or bust,—
Fer South Pokus is religious, as I said along at fust.

And the Methodist is buried, when his time comes 'round ter die,
In the little weedy graveyard where no other sect can lie,
And at Second Advent socials, every other Wednesday night,
No one 's ever really welcome but a Second Adventite;

While the Unitarian brother, as he walks the village streets,
Seldom bows unless another Unitarian he meets;
And there 's only Univers'lists in a Univers'list's store,—
Fer South Pokus is religious, as I think I said before.

I thought I 'd read that Jesus come ter do the whole world good,—
Come ter bind the Jew and Gentile in a lovin' brotherhood;
But it seems that I 'm mistaken, and I haven't read it right,
And the text of "*Love* your neighbor" must be somewhere written "Fight";
But I want ter tell yer, church folks, and ter put it to yer strong,
While *you 're fightin'*, Old Nick's fellers *pull tergether* right along:
So yer 'd better stop your squabblin', be united if yer can,
Fer the Pokus way of doin' ain't no use ter God or man.

WHEN THE MINISTER COMES TO TEA

Oh! they 've swept the parlor carpet, and they 've dusted every chair,
And they 've got the tidies hangin' jest exactly on the square;
And the what-not 's fixed up lovely, and the mats have all been beat,
And the pantry 's brimmin' over with the bully things ter eat;
Sis has got her Sunday dress on, and she 's frizzin' up her bangs;
Ma 's got on her best alpacky, and she 's askin' how it hangs;
Pa has shaved as slick as can be, and I 'm rigged way up in G,—
And it 's all because we 're goin' ter have the minister ter tea.

Oh! the table 's fixed up gaudy with the gilt-edged chiny set,
And we 'll use the silver tea-pot and the comp'ny spoons, you bet;
And we 're goin' ter have some fruit-cake and some thimbleberry jam,
And "riz biscuits," and some doughnuts, and some chicken, and some ham.

Ma, she 'll 'polergize like fury and say everything is
bad,
And "Sich awful luck with cookin'," she is sure she
never had;
But, er course, she 's only bluffin', for it 's as prime as
it can be,
And she 's only talkin' that way 'cause the minister 's
ter tea.

Everybody 'll be a-smilin' and as good as ever was,
Pa won't growl about the vittles, like he generally does,
And he 'll ask me would I like another piece er pie;
but, sho!
That, er course, is only manners, and I 'm s'posed ter
answer "No."

Sis 'll talk about the church-work and about the Sunday-school,
Ma 'll tell how she liked that sermon that was on the Golden Rule,
And if I upset my tumbler they won't say a word ter me:—
Yes, a boy can eat in comfort with the minister ter tea!

Say! a minister, you 'd reckon, never 'd say what was n't true;
But that is n't so with ours, and I jest can prove it, too;
'Cause when Sis plays on the organ so it makes yer want ter die,
Why, he sets and says it 's lovely; and that, seems ter me, 's a lie:
But I like him all the samey, and I only wish he 'd stay
At our house fer good and always, and eat with us every day;
Only think of havin' goodies *every* evenin'! Jimmi*nee!*
And I 'd *never* git a scoldin' with the minister ter tea!

"YAP"

I 've got a little yaller dog, a wuthless kind of chap,
Who jest ain't good fer nothin' but ter eat and sleep
and "yap."
Fer all 'round general wuthlessness I never see his beat,
And yet he makes more fuss and noise than all the
farm complete.
There ain't a mite of sense inside that yaller hide of his;
But, as *he* ain't no good, he likes ter pester them that is.
The critters all despise him, but there ain't a one but
feels
A little mite oneasy when he 's "yappin' " round their
heels.

Yer see, he loves ter sneak around behind 'em, out of
sight,
And give a sudden snap and snarl as if he meant ter
bite;
Of course they know he would n't hurt, and only means
to scare,
But still, it worries 'em ter know the little scamp is
there;
And if they do git nervous-like and try to hit him back
He swells up so with pride it seems as if his skin would
crack;

And then he 's wuss than ever, so they find it does n't pay,
But let him keep on " yappin' " till he 's tired and goes away.

There 's lots of people built like him—yer see 'em everywhere—
Who, 'cause they ain't no use themselves, can 't somehow seem ter bear
Ter see another feller rise, but in their petty spite
And natural meanness, snarl and snap and show they 'd like ter bite.
They do n't come out in front like men, and squarely speak their mind,
But like that wuthless yaller pup, they 're hangin' 'round behind.
They 're little and contemptible, but if yer make a slip
It must be bothersome ter know they 'll take that chance ter nip.

But there! perhaps it is n't right ter mind 'em, after all;
Perhaps we ought ter thank the Lord *our* souls ain't quite so small;
And they, with all their sneakin' ways, must be, I rather guess,
The thorns that prick your fingers 'round the roses of success:

Fer, when yer come ter think of it, they never bark
until
A feller 's really started and a good ways up the hill;
So, 'f I was climbin' up ter fame I would n't care a rap,
But I 'd think I *was* somebody when the curs begun
ter "yap."

THE MINISTER'S WIFE

She 's little and modest and purty,
As red as a rose and as sweet;
Her children don't ever look dirty,
Her kitchen ain't no way but neat.
She 's the kind of a woman ter cherish,
A help ter a feller through life,
Yet every old hen in the parish
Is down on the minister's wife.

'Twas Mrs. 'Lige Hawkins begun it;
She always has had the idee
That the church was built so 's she could run it,
'Cause Hawkins is deacon, yer see;
She thought that the whole congregation
Kept step ter the tune of her fife,
But she found 't was a wrong calkerlation
Applied ter the minister's wife.

Then Mrs. Jedge Jenks got excited—
She thinks she 's the whole upper crust;—
When she found the Smiths was invited
Ter meet 'n', she quit in disgust.
"*You* can have all the paupers yer choose to,"
Says she, jest as sharp as a knife;
"But if *they* go ter church *I* refuse to!"
"Good-by!" says the minister's wife.

And then Mrs. Jackson got stuffy
At her not comin' sooner ter call,
And old Miss Macgregor is huffy
'Cause she went up ter Jackson's at all.
Each one of the crowd hates the other,
The church has been full of their strife;
But now they 're all hatin' another,
And that one 's the minister's wife.

But still, all their cackle unheedin',
She goes, in her ladylike way,
A-givin' the poor what they 're needin',
And helpin' the church every day:
Our numbers each Sunday is swellin',
And real, true religion is rife,
And sometimes I feel like a-yellin',
"Three cheers fer the minister's wife!"

"'Well, now, I vum! I know, by gum!
I'm right because I *be!*'"

THE VILLAGE ORACLE

"I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"

Old Dan'l Hanks he says this town
Is jest the best on earth;
He says there ain't one, up nor down,
That 's got one half her worth;
He says there ain't no other state
That 's good as ourn, nor near;
And all the folks that 's good and great
Is settled right 'round here.

Says I "D'jer ever travel, Dan?"
"You bet I ain't!" says he;
"I tell you what! the place I 've got
Is good enough fer me!"

He says the other party 's fools,
'Cause they do n't vote his way;
He says the "feeble-minded schools"
Is where they ought ter stay;

If he was law their mouths he'd shut,
Or blow 'em all ter smash;
He says their platform 's nawthin' but
A great big mess of trash.

Says I, "D'jer ever read it, Dan?"
"You bet I ain't!" says he;
"And when I do; well, I tell you,
I'll let you know, by gee!"

He says that all religion 's wrong
'Cept jest what he believes;
He says them ministers belong
In jail, the same as thieves;
He says they take the blessed Word
And tear it all ter shreds;
He says their preachin''s jest absurd;
They 're simply leatherheads.

Says I, "D'jer ever hear 'em, Dan?"
"You bet I ain't!" says he;
"I'd never go ter *hear* 'em; no;
They make me sick ter *see!*"

Some fellers reckon, more or less,
Before they speak their mind,
And sometimes calkerlate or guess,—
But them ain't Dan'l's kind.

The Lord knows all things, great or small,
With doubt he's never vexed;
He, in his wisdom, knows it all,—
But Dan'l Hanks comes next.

Says I, "How d' yer know you 're right?"
"How do I *know?*" says he;
"Well, now, I vum! I know, by gum!
I 'm right because I *be!*"

THE TIN PEDDLER

Jason White has come ter town
Drivin' his tin peddler's cart,
Pans a-bangin' up an' down
Like they 'd tear theirselves apart;
Kittles rattlin' underneath,
Coal-hods scrapin' out a song,—
Makes a feller grit his teeth
When old Jason comes along.

Jason drives a sorrel mare,
Bones an' skin at all her j'ints,
"Blooded stock," says Jase; "I swear,
Jest see how she shows her p'ints!

Walkin' 's her best lay," says he,
Eyes a-twinklin' full of fun,
"Named her Keely Motor. See?
Sich hard work ter make her run."

Jason 's jest the slickest scamp,
Full of jokes as he can hold;
Says he beats Aladdin's lamp,
Givin' out new stuff fer old;
"Buy your rags fer more 'n they 're worth,
Give yer bran'-new, shiny tin,
I 'm the softest snap on earth,"
Says old Jason, with a grin.

Jason gits the women's ear
Tellin' news and talkin' dress;
Can 't be peddlin' forty year
An' not know 'em more or less;
Children like him; sakes alive!
Why, my Jim, the other night,
Says, "When I git big I 'll drive
Peddler's cart, like Jason White!

"SARY EMMA'S PHOTYGRAPHS"

Our Sary Emma is possessed ter be at somethin' queer;
She 's allers doin' loony things, unheard of fur and near.
One time there wa' n't no limit ter the distance she would tramp
Ter get a good-fer-nothin', wuthless, cancelled postage-stamp;
Another spell folks could n't rest ontil, by hook or crook,
She got 'em all ter write their names inside a leetle book;
But though them fits was bad enough, the wust is nowadays,
Fer now she 's got that pesky freak, the photygraphin' craze.

She had ter have a camera—and them things cost a sight—
So she took up subscriptions fer the "Woman's Home Delight"
And got one fer a premium—a blamed new-fangled thing,
That takes a tin-type sudden, when she presses on a spring;

And sence she got it, sakes alive! there's nothin' on
the place
That hain't been pictured lookin' like a horrible dis-
grace:
The pigs, the cows, the horse, the colt, the chickens
large and small;
She goes a-gunnin' fer 'em, and she bags 'em, one and
all.

She tuk me once a-settin' up on top a load er hay:
My feet shets out the wagon, and my head's a mile
away;
She took her Ma in our back yard, a-hanging out the
clothes,
With hands as big as buckets, and a face that's mostly
nose.
A yard of tongue and monstrous teeth is what she
calls a dog;
The cat's a kind er fuzzy-lookin' shadder in a fog;
And I've got a suspicion that what killed the brindle
calf
Was that he seen his likeness in our Sary's photy-
graph.

She's "tonin'," er "develerpin'," er "printin'," ha'f the
time;
She's allers buyin' pasteboard ter mount up her latest
crime;

Our front room and the settin'-room is like some awful
show,
With freaks and framed outrages stuck all 'round 'em
in a row:
But soon I 'll take them picters, and I 'll fetch some
of 'em out
And hang 'em 'round the garden when the corn begins
ter sprout;
We 'll have no crows and blackbirds ner that kind er
feathered trash,
'Cause them photygraphs of Sary's, they beat scare-
crows all ter smash.

WHEN PAPA 'S SICK

When Papa 's sick, my goodness sakes!
Such awful, awful times it makes.
He speaks in, oh! such lonesome tones,
And gives such ghas'ly kind of groans,
And rolls his eyes and holds his head,
And makes Ma help him up to bed,
While Sis and Bridget run to heat
Hot-water bags to warm his feet,
And I must get the doctor *quick*,—
We have to *jump* when Papa's sick.

When Papa's sick Ma has to stand
Right 'side the bed and hold his hand,
While Sis, she has to fan an' fan,
For he says he 's "a dyin' man,"
And wants the children round him to
Be there when "sufferin' Pa gets through";
He says he wants to say good-by
And kiss us all, and then he 'll die;
Then moans and says his "breathin' 's thick",—
It 's awful sad when Papa 's sick.

When Papa 's sick he acts that way
Until he hears the doctor say,
"You 've only got a cold, you know;
You 'll be all right 'n a day or so";
And then—well, say! you ought to see—
He 's different as he can be,
And growls and swears from noon to night
Just 'cause his dinner ain't cooked right;
And all he does is fuss and kick,—
We 're *all* used up when Papa 's sick.

THE BALLAD OF McCARTY'S TROMBONE

SURE, Felix McCarty he lived all alone
On the top av a hill be the town av Athlone,
And the pride av his heart was a batthered trombone,
That he played in an iligant style av his own.
And often I 've heard me ould grandfather say,
That, long as he lived, on Saint Patherick's Day,
The minute the dawn showed the first streak av gray
McCarty would rise and this tune he would play:

"Pertaters and fishes make very good dishes,
Saint Patherick's Day in the mornin'!"
With tootin' and blowin' he kept it a-goin',
For rest was a thing he was scornin';
And thim that were lazy could niver lie aisy,
But jumped out av bed at the warnin';
For who could be stayin' aslape with him playin'
"Saint Patherick's Day in the mornin'?"

And thin whin the b'ys would fall in fer parade,
McCarty 'd be gay with his buttons and braid,
And whin he stipped out fer ter head the brigade,
Why, this was the beautiful tune that he played:

"By—Killarney's—lakes—and—fells,
Toot—tetoot toot—toot—toot—dells!"
And—the heel av—McCart—y's—boot
Marked—the time at—iv'—ry—toot,
While—the slide at—aich—bass—note
Seemed—ter slip half—down—his throat,
As—he caught his—breath—be—spells:—
"By—Killarney's—lakes—and—fells!"

Now McCarty he lived ter be wrinkled and lean,
But he died wan fine day playin' "Wearin' the green,"
And they sould the ould horn to a British spalpeen,
And it bu'st whin he tried ter blow "God save the Queen";

But the nights av Saint Patherick's Days in Athlone
Folks dare not go by the ould graveyard alone,
For they say that McCarty sits on his tombstone
And plays this sad tune on a phantom trombone:

"The harp that wance through Tara's halls
The sowl av music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that sowl were dead."
And all who 've heard the lonesome *keens*
That that grim ghost has blown,
Know well by Tara's harp he means
That batthered ould trombone.

SUSAN VAN DOOZEN

I 'LL write, for I 'm witty, a popular ditty,
To bring to me shekels and fame,
And the only right way one may write one to-day
Is to give it some Irish girl's name.
There 's "Rosy O'Grady," that dear "steady lady,"
And sweet "Annie Rooney" and such,
But mine shall be nearly original, really,
For Susan Van Doozen is Dutch.

O Susan Van Doozen! the girl of my choos'n',
You stick in my bosom like glue;
While this you 're perusin', remember I'm mus'n',
Sweet Susan Van Doozen, on you.
So do n't be refus'n' my offer, and bruis'n'
A heart that is willing to woo;
And please be excus'n', not cold and refus'n',—
O Susan Van Doozen, please do!

Now through it I 'll scatter—a quite easy matter—
Some lines that we all of us know,
How "The neighbors all cry as she passes them by,
'There 's Susan, the pride of the row!'"
And something like "daisy" and "setting me crazy,"
—These lines the dear public would miss—
Then chuck a "sweetheart" in, and "never to part" in,
And end with a chorus like this:

O Susan Van Doozen! before I'd be los'n'
One glance from your eyes of sky-blue,
I vow I 'd quit us'n' tobacco and booz'n',
(That word is not nice, it is true).
I wear out my shoes, 'n' I 'm los'n' my roos'n',
My reason, I should say, dear Sue,—
So please change your views 'n' become my own Susan,
O Susan Van Doozen, please do!

SISTER SIMMONS

ALMOST every other evenin', jest as reg'lar as the clock
When we 're settin' down ter supper, wife and I, there comes a knock
An' a high-pitched voice, remarkin', "Do n't get up; it 's *me*, yer know";
An' our mercury drops from "summer" down ter "twenty-five below,"
An' our cup of bliss turns sudden inter wormwood mixed with gall,
Fer we know it 's Sister Simmons come ter make her "reg'lar call."

In she comes an' takes the rocker. Thinks she 'll slip her bunnit off,
But she 'll keep her shawl on, coz she 's 'fraid of addin' ter her cough.
No, she won't set down ter supper. Tea? well, yes, a half er cup.
Her dyspepsy 's been so lately, seems as if she *should* give up;
An', 'tween rheumatiz an' as'ma, she 's jest worn ter skin an' bone.
It 's a good thing that she told us,—by her looks we 'd never known.

Next, she starts in on the neighbors; tells us all their
private cares,
While we have the fun er knowin' how she talks of *our*
affairs;
Says, with sobs, that Christmas comin' makes her feel
so bad, for, oh!
Her Isaiah, the dear departed, allers did enjoy it so.
Her Isaiah, poor henpecked critter, 's been dead seven
years er more,
An' looked happier in his coffin than he ever did afore.

So she sits, her tongue a-waggin' in the same old
mournful tones,
Spoilin' all our quiet evenin's with her troubles an'
her groans,
Till, by Jude, I 'm almost longin' fer those mansions
of the blest,
"Where the wicked cease from troublin' an' the weary
are at rest!"
But if Sister Simmons' station is before the Throne er
Grace,
I 'll just ask 'em to excuse me, an' I 'll try the other
place.

"THE FIFT' WARD J'INT DEBATE"

Now Councilman O'Hoolihan do' n't b'lave in annixation,
He says thim Phillypynos air the r-r-ruin av the nation.
He says this counthry's job is jist a-mindin' av her biz,
And imparyilism 's thrayson, so ut is, so ut is.
But big Moike Macnamara, him that runs the gin saloon,
He wants the nomina-a-tion, so he sings a different chune;
He 's a-howlin' fer ixpansion, so he puts ut on the shlate
Thot he challenged Dan O'Hoolihan ter have a j'int debate.

Ho, ho! Begorra! Oi wisht that ye 'd been there!
Ho, ho! Begorra! 'T was lovely, Oi declare;
The langwudge, sure 't was iligant, the rhitoric was great,
Whin Dan and Mack, they had ut back,
At our big j'int debate.

'T was in the War-r-d Athletic Club we had ut fixed ter hear 'em,
And all the sates was crowded, fer the gang was there ter cheer 'em;

A foine debatin' platfor-r-m had been built inside the ring,
And iverybuddy said 't was jist the thing, jist the thing.
O'Hoolihan, he shtarted off be sayin', ut was safe
Ter say that aich ixpansionist was jist a murth'rin thafe;
And, whin I saw big Mack turn rid, and shtart ter lave his sate,
Oi knew we 'd have a gor-r-geous toime at our big j'int debate.

Thin Moike he tuk his tur-r-n ter shpake, "Av Oi wance laid me hand,"
Says he, "upon an 'Anti,' faith! Oi 'd make his nose ixpand;
Oi 'd face the schnakin' blackguar-r-d, and Oi 'd baste him where he shtood.
Oi 'd annix him to a graveyard, so Oi would, so Oi would!"
Thin up jumped Dan O'Hoolihan a-roar-r-in' out "Yez loie!"
And flung his b'aver hat at Mack, and plunked him in the eye;
And Moike he niver shtopped ter talk, but grappled wid him straight,
And the ar-r-gymint got loively thin, at our big j'int debate.

Oi niver in me loife have seen sich char-r-min' illycution,
The gistures av thim wid their fists was grand in ixecution;
We tried to be impar-r-tial, so no favoroite we made,
But jist sicked them on tergither, yis indade, yis indade.
And nayther wan was half convinced whin Sar-r-gint Leary came,
Wid near a dozen other cops, and stopped the purty game;
But niver did Oi see dhress-suits in sich a mortial state
As thim the or-r-ators had on at our big j'int debate.

Ho, ho! Begorra! Oi wisht that ye'd been there!
Ho, ho! Begorra! The foight was on the square;
Ter see the wagon goin' off, wid thim two on the sate!—
Oi'd loike ter shtroike, 'twixt Dan and Moike,
Another j'int debate.

HIS NEW BROTHER

Say, I 've got a little brother,
Never teased to have him, nuther,
But he 's here;
They just went ahead and bought him,
And, last week the doctor brought him,
Wa' n't that queer?

When I heard the news from Molly,
Why, I thought at first 't was jolly,
'Cause, you see,
I s'posed I could go and get him
And then Mama, course, would let him
Play with me.

But when I had once looked at him,
"Why!" I says, "My sakes, is *that* him?
Just that mite!"
They said, "Yes," and, "Ain't he cunnin'?"
And I thought they must be funnin',—
He 's a *sight!*

"Why 'd they buy a baby brother,
When they know I 'd *good* deal ruther
Have a dog?"

He 's so small, it 's just amazin',
And you 'd think that he was blazin',
He 's so red;
And his nose is like a berry,
And he 's bald as Uncle Jerry
On his head.

Why, he is n't worth a dollar!
All he does is cry and holler
More and more;
Won't sit up—you can 't arrange him,—
I do n't see why Pa do' n't change him
At the store.

Now we 've got to dress and feed him,
And we really did n't *need* him
More 'n a frog;
Why 'd they buy a baby brother,
When they know I 'd *good* deal ruther
Have a dog?

CIRCLE DAY

Me and Billy 's in the woodshed; Ma said, "Run outdoors and play;
Be good boys and do n't be both'rin', till the comp'ny 's gone away."
She and sister Mary 's hustlin', settin' out the things for tea,
And the parlor 's full of women, such a crowd you never see;
Every one a-cuttin' patchwork or a-sewin' up a seam,
And the way their tongues is goin', seems as if they went by steam.
Me and Billy 's been a-listenin' and, I tell you what, it beats
Circus day to hear 'em gabbin', when the Sewin' Circle meets.

First they almost had a squabble, fightin' 'bout the future life;
When they 'd settled that they started runnin' down the parson's wife.
Then they got a-goin' roastin' all the folks there is in town,
And they never stopped, you bet yer, till they 'd done 'em good and brown.

They knew everybody's business and they made it
mighty free,
But the way they loved *each other* would have done
yer good to see;
Seems ter me the only way ter keep yer hist'ry off the
streets
Is to be on hand a-waitin' when the Sewin' Circle meets.

Pretty quick they 'll have their supper, then 's the time
to see the fun;
Ma 'll say the rolls is *awful*, and she 's 'fraid the pie
ain't done.
Really everything is bully, and she knows it well
enough,
But the folks that 's havin' comp'ny always talks that
kind of stuff.
That sets all the women goin', and they say, "How
can you make
Such *delicious* pies and biscuits, and such *lovely* choc'-
late cake?"
Me and Billy don't say nothin' when we pitches in
and eats
Up the things there is left over when the Sewin' Circle
meets.

I guess Pa don't like the Circle, 'cause he said ter
Uncle Jim
That there cacklin' hen convention was too peppery
for *him*.

And he 'll say to Ma, "I 'm sorry, but I 've really got
ter dodge
Down t' the hall right after supper—there 's a meetin'
at the lodge."
Ma 'll say, "Yes, so I expected." Then a-speakin'
kinder cold,
"Seems ter me, I 'd get a new one; that excuse is get-
tin' old!"
Pa 'll look sick, just like a feller when he finds you
know he cheats,
But he do' n't stay home, you bet yer, when the Sewin'
Circle meets.

SERMON TIME

"Blessed are the poor in spirit": there, I 'll just re-
member that,
And I 'll say it over 'n over, till I 've got it good and pat,
For when I get home from meetin', Gran'ma 'll ask
me for the text,
And if I say I 've forgot it, she 'll be goin' for me next,
Sayin', I do n't pay attention, and what *am* I comin' to;
Tellin' 'bout when *she* was little, same as old folks
always do.
Say, I 'll bet she did n't like it any better than the rest,
Sittin' 'round all stiff and starchy, dressed up in your
Sunday best.

"Blessed are the poor"—I tell yer, some day I 'll be clearin' out,
Leavin' all this dressin' nonsense, 'cause I 'm goin' ter be a scout,
Same as "Deadwood Dick," a-killin' all the Injuns on the plains:
He do' n't comb his hair, you bet yer; no, nor wash, unless it rains.
And bimeby I 'll come home, bringin' loads of gold and di'mon' rings;
My, won't all the boys be jealous when they see those kind of things!
'N' I 'll have a reputation, folks 'll call me "Lariat Ben,"
Gran'ma 'll think I 'mount ter somethin', maybe, when she sees me then.

"Blessed are the"—There' s a blackbird, outside, sittin' on a limb,—
Gosh! I wish it was n't Sunday, p'raps I would n't go for him.
Sis says stonin' birds is wicked, but she 's got one on her hat,—
S'pose that makes it right and proper, if yer kill 'em just for that.
There 's that dudey city feller, sittin' in the Deacon's pew.
Need n't feel so big now, Smarty, just because your clothes are new;

Me and Sam has rigged a hat line; when it's dark to-morrer night
We'll just catch your shiny beaver and we'll send it out of sight.

"Blessed are"—There's Mr. Wiggin sound asleep. I wish he'd snore.
Cracky! Now he's been and done it, dropped his hymn-book on the floor.
See how cross his wife is lookin'. Say, I bet they'll have a row;
Pa said that she wore the breeches, but she's got a dress on now.
There's Nell Baker with her uncle. Her 'n I don't speak at school,
'Cause she would n't help a feller when I clean forgot the rule.
Used to be my girl before that—Gee! what was that text about?
"Blessed—blessed—blessed" something. I'll ask Sis when we get out.

"TAKIN' BOARDERS"

We 'd never thought of takin' 'em,—'t was Mary Ann's idee,—
Sence she got back from boardin'-school she 's called herself "Maree"
An' scattered city notions like a tom-cat sheds his fur.
She thought our old melodeon wa' n't good enough fer her,
An' them pianners cost so that she said the only way
Was ter take in summer boarders till we 'd made enough to pay;
So she wrote adver*tise*ments out to fetch 'em inter camp,
An' now there 's boarders thicker here than June bugs round a lamp.

Our best front parlor 'll jest be sp'iled; they h'ist up every shade
An' open all the blinds, by gum! an' let the carpet fade.
They 're in there week days jest the same as Sunday; I declare,
I really think our haircloth set is showin' signs o' wear!

They set up ha'f the night an' sing,—no use ter try
ter sleep,
With them a-askin' folks ter "Dig a grave both wide
an' deep,"
An' "Who will smoke my mashum pipe?" By gee!
I tell yer what:
If they want me to dig their graves, I 'd jest as soon
as not!

There ain't no comfort now at meals; I can 't take off
my coat,
Nor use my knife to eat, nor tie my napkin 'round
my throat,
Nor drink out of my sasser. Gosh! I hardly draw
my breath
'Thout Mary Ann a-tellin' me she 's "mortified to
death!"
Before they came our breakfast time was allus ha'f-
past six;
By thunderation! 't would n't do; you 'd orter hear
the kicks!
So jest to suit 'em 't was put off till sometime arter
eight,
An' when a chap gits up at four that 's mighty long
ter wait.

The idee was that Mary Ann would help her Ma;
but, land!
She can 't be round a minute but some boarder 's right
on hand

Ter take her out ter walk or ride—*she* likes it well
enough,
But when you 're gittin' grub for twelve, Ma finds it
kinder tough.
We ain't a-sayin' nothin' now, we 'll see this season
through,
But folks that bought one gold brick ain't in love with
number two;
An' if you 're passin' down our way next summer, cast
your eye
At our front fence. You 'll see a sign,

"No Boarders Need Apply."

A COLLEGE TRAINING

Home from college came the stripling, calm and cool
and debonair,
With a weird array of raiment and a wondrous wealth
of hair,
With a lazy love of langour and a healthy hate of work
And a cigarette devotion that would shame the tur-
baned Turk.
And he called his father "Guv'nor," with a cheek
serene and rude,
While that raging, wrathful rustic called his son a
"blasted dude,"

And in dark and direful language muttered threats
of coming harm
To the "idle, shif'less critter" from his father's good
right arm.

And the trouble reached a climax on the lawn behind
the shed,—
"Now, I 'm goin' ter lick yer, sonny," so the sturdy
parent said,
"And I 'll knock the college nonsense from your noddle,
mighty quick!"—
Then he lit upon that chappy like a wagon-load of
brick.
But the youth serenely murmured, as he gripped his
angry dad,
"You 're a clever rusher, Guv'nor, but you tackle very
bad";
And he rushed him through the center and he tripped
him for a fall,
And he scored a goal and touchdown with his papa
as the ball.

Then a cigarette he lighted, as he slowly strolled away,
Saying, "That was jolly, Guv'nor, now we 'll practice
every day";
While his father from the puddle, where he wallowed
in disgrace,
Smiled upon his offspring, proudly, from a bruised
and battered face,

"'That was jolly, Guv'nor,
now we'll practice
every day,'"

And with difficulty rising, quick he hobbled to the house.
"Henry 's all right, Ma!" he shouted to his anxious, waiting spouse,
"He jest licked me good and solid, and I tell yer, Mary Ann,
When a chap kin lick *your husband* he 's a mighty able man!"

A CRUSHED HERO

On a log behind the pigsty of a modest little farm,
Sits a freckled youth and lanky, red of hair and long of arm;
But his mien is proud and haughty and his brow is high and stern,
And beneath their sandy lashes, fiery eyes with purpose burn.
Bow before him, gentle reader, he 's the hero we salute,
He is Hiram Adoniram Andrew Jackson Shute.

Search not Fame's immortal marbles, never there his name you 'll find,
For our hero, let us whisper, is a hero in his mind;

And a youth may bathe in glory, wade in slaughter time on time,
When a novel, wild and gory, may be purchased for a dime.
And through reams of lurid pages has he slain the Sioux and Ute,
Bloody Hiram Adoniram Andrew Jackson Shute.

Hark, a heavy step advancing,—list, a father's angry cry,
"He hain't shucked a single nubbin; where 's that good-fer-nothin' Hi?"
"Here, base catiff," comes the answer, "here am I who was your slave,
But no more I 'll do your shuckin', though I fill a bloody grave!
Freedom's fire my breast has kindled; there 'll be bloodshed, tyrant! brute!"
Quoth brave Hiram Adoniram Andrew Jackson Shute.

"Breast 's a-blazin', is it, Sonny?" asks his father with a smile,
"Kind er like a stove, I reckon, what they call 'gas-burner' style.
Good 'base-burner' 's what your needin'"—here he pins our hero fast,
"Come, young man, we 'll try the woodshed, keep the bloodshed till the last."

Then an atmosphere of horse-whip, interspersed with
cow-hide boot,
Wraps young Hiram Adoniram Andrew Jackson Shute.

. . . . . .

Weep ye now, oh, gentle reader, for the fallen, great
of heart,
As ye wept o'er Saint Helena and the exiled Bonaparte;
For a picture, sad as that one, to your pity I would
show
Of a spirit crushed and broken,—of a hero lying low;
For where husks are heaped the highest, working
swiftly, hushed and mute,
Shucketh Hiram Adoniram Andrew Jackson Shute.

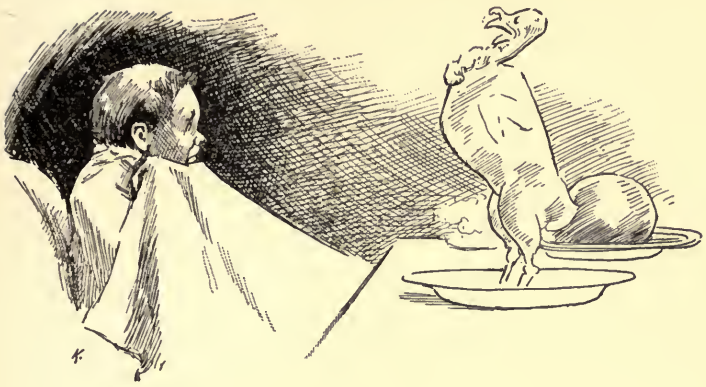
A THANKSGIVING DREAM

I 'M PRETTY nearly certain that 't was 'bout two weeks
ago,—
It might be more, or, p'raps 't was less,—but, anyhow,
I know
'T was on the night I ate the four big saucers of ice-
cream
That I dreamed jest the horriblest, most awful, *worstest*
dream!

I dreamed that 't was Thanksgivin', and I saw our table laid
With every kind of goody that, I guess, was ever made;
With turkey, and with puddin', and with everything,—but, gee!
'T was dreadful, 'cause they was alive, and set and looked at me.

And then a great big gobbler, that was on a platter there,
He stood up on his drumsticks, and he says, "You boy, take care!
For if, Thanksgivin' Day, you taste my dark meat or my white,
I 'll creep up to your bedroom in the middle of the night;
I 'll throw off all the blankets, and I 'll pull away the sheet,
I 'll prance and dance upon you with my prickly, tickly feet;
I 'll kick you, and I 'll pick you, and I 'll screech, 'Remember me!'
Beware, my boy! Take care, my boy!" that gobbler says, says he.

And then a fat plum puddin' kind er grunted-like and said:
"I 'm round and hot and steamin', and I 'm heavier than lead,



And if you dare to eat me, boy, upon Thanksgivin' Day,
I 'll come at night and tease you in a frightful sort of way.
I 'll thump you, and I 'll bump you, and I 'll jump up high and fall
Down on your little stomach like a sizzlin' cannon-ball;
I 'll hound you, and I 'll pound you, and I 'll screech, 'Remember me!'
Beware, my boy! Take care, my boy!" that puddin' says, says he.

And then, soon as the puddin' stopped, a crusty old mince pie
Jumped from its plate and glared at me and winked its little eye;

"You boy," it says, "Thanksgivin' Day, do n't dare ter touch a slice
Of me, for if you do, I 'll come and cramp you like a vise.
I 'll root you, and I 'll boot you, and I 'll twist you till you squeal,
I 'll stand on edge and roll around your stomach like a wheel;
I 'll hunch you, and I 'll punch you, and I 'll screech, 'Remember me!'"

. . . . . .

I do n't know what came after that, 'cause I woke up, you see.

You would n't b'lieve that talk like that one ever *could* forget,
But, say! ter-day 's Thanksgivin,' and I 've et, and et, and et!
And when I 'd stuffed jest all I could, I jumped and gave a scream,
'Cause all at once, when 't was too late, I 'membered 'bout that dream.
And now it 's almost bedtime, and I ought ter say my prayers
And tell the folks "good-night" and go a-pokin' off up-stairs;
But, oh, my sakes! I das n't, 'cause I know them things 'll be
All hidin' somewheres 'round my bed and layin' there fer me.

O'REILLY'S BILLY-GOAT

A SOLEMN Sabbath stillness lies along the Mudville lanes,
Among the crags of Shantytown a peaceful quiet reigns,
For down upon McCarty's dump, in fiery fight for fame,
The Shanties meet the Mudvilles in the final pennant game;
And heedless of the frantic fray, in center field remote,
Behind the biggest ash-heap lies O'Reilly's billy-goat.

The eager crowd bends forward now, in fierce excitement's thrall,
The pitcher writhes in serpent twist, the umpire says, "Play ball!"
The batsman swings with sudden spite,—a loud, resounding "spat,"
And hissing through the ambient air the horse-hide leaves the bat;
With one terrific battle-cry, the "rooter" clears his throat,
But still serene in slumber lies O'Reilly's billy-goat.

Alas, alas for Shantytown! the Mudvilles forge ahead;
Alas for patriotic hopes! the green 's below the red;
With one half inning still to play the score is three to two,
The Shantys have a man on base,—be brave my lads, and true;
Bold Captain Muggsy comes to bat, a batsman he of note,
And slowly o'er the ash-heap walks O'Reilly's billy-goat.

The yelling Mudville hosts have wrecked his slumbers so serene,
With deep disgust and sullen eye he gazes o'er the scene.
He notes the center-fielder's garb, the Mudvilles' shirt of red;
He firmly plants his sturdy legs, he bows his hornèd head,
And, as upon his shaggy ears the Mudville slogan smote,
A sneer played 'mid the whiskers of O'Reilly's billy-goat.

The valiant Muggsy hits the ball. Oh, deep and dark despair!
He hits it hard and straight, but ah, he hits it in the air!
The Mudville center-fielder smiles and reaches forth in glee,

He knows that fly 's an easy out for such a man as he.
Beware, oh rash and reckless youth, nor o'er your
triumph gloat,
For toward you like a comet flies O'Reilly's billy-goat.

Across the battle-field is borne a dull and muffled
sound,
The fielder like a bullock falls, the ball rolls on the
ground.
Around the bases on the wing the gallant Muggsy
speeds,
And follows swiftly in the track where fast his com-
rade leads.
And from the field of chaos where the dusty billows
float,
With calm, majestic mien there stalks O'Reilly's billy-
goat.

Above the crags of Shantytown the flaunting pennant
waves,
And cheering myriads chant the praise of Muggsy's
lusty braves.
The children shout in gladsome glee, each fair one
waves her hand,
As down the street the heroes march with lively Ger-
man band;
But wilder grows the tumult when, with ribboned
horns and coat,
They see, on high in triumph borne, O'Reilly's billy-
goat.

THE CUCKOO CLOCK

When Ezry, that 's my sister's son, come home from furrin parts,
He fetched the folks a lot of things ter brighten up their hearts;
He fetched 'em silks and gloves and clothes, and knick-knacks, too, a stock,
But all he fetched fer us was jest a fancy cuckoo clock.
'T was all fixed up with paint and gilt, and had a little door
Where sat the cutest little bird, and when 't was three or four
Or five or six or any time, that bird would jest come out
And, 'cordin' ter what time it was, he 'd flap his wings and shout:
"*Hoo*-hoo! *Hoo*-hoo! *Hoo*-hoo!"

Well, fust along we had it, why, I thought 't was simply prime!
And used to poke the hands around ter make it "cuckoo" time;

And allers when we 'd comp'ny come, they had ter see
the thing,
And, course they almost had a fit when " birdie " come
ter sing.
But, by and by, b' gosh ! I found it somehow lost its
joys,
I found it kind er made me sick to hear that senseless
noise ;
I wished 't was jest a common clock, that struck a gong,
yer know,
And did n't have no foolish bird ter flap his wings
and go :
" *Hoo*-hoo ! *Hoo*-hoo ! *Hoo*-hoo ! "

Well, things git on from bad to wuss, until I 'm free
ter grant,
I 'd smash it into kindlin', but a present, so, I can 't !
And, though a member of the church, and deacon, I
declare,
That thing jest sets me up on end and makes me want
ter swear !
I try ter be religious and ter tread the narrer way,
But seems as if that critter knew when I knelt down
ter pray,
And all my thoughts of heaven go a-tumblin' down
ter,—well,
A different kind of climate—when that bird sets out
ter yell :
" *Hoo*-hoo ! *Hoo*-hoo ! *Hoo*-hoo ! "

I read once in a poetry book, that Ezry had ter home,
The awful fuss a feller made about a crow, that come
And pestered him about ter death and made him sick and sore,
By settin' on his mantel-piece and hollerin' "Nevermore!"
But, say, I 'd ruther have the crow, with all his fuss and row,
His bellerin' had *some* sense, b' gosh! 'T was *English*, anyhow;
And all the crows in Christendom that talked a Christian talk
Would seem like nightingales, compared ter that air furrin squawk:
"*Hoo*-hoo! *Hoo*-hoo! *Hoo*-hoo!"

THE POPULAR SONG

I NEVER was naturally vicious;
My spirit was lamb-like and mild;
I never was bad or malicious;
I loved with the trust of a child.
But hate now my bosom is burning,
And all through my being I long
To get one solid thump on the head of the chump
Who wrote the new popular song.

"The washwoman
sings it all wrong."

The office-boy hums it,
The book-keeper drums it,
It 's whistled by all on the street;
The hand-organ grinds it,
The music-box winds it,
It 's sung by the "cop" on the beat.
The newsboy, he spouts it,
The bootblack, he shouts it,
The washwoman sings it all wrong;
And I laugh, and I weep,
And I wake, and I sleep,
To the tune of that popular song.

Its measures are haunting my dreaming;
I rise at the breakfast-bell's call
To hear the new chambermaid screaming
The chorus aloud through the hall.
The landlady's daughter's piano
Is helping the concert along,
And my molars I break on the tenderloin steak
As I chew to that popular song.

The orchestra plays it,
The German band brays it,
'T is sung on the platform and stage;
All over the city
They 're chanting the ditty;
At summer resorts it 's the rage.
The drum corps, it beats it,
The echo repeats it,

The bass-drummer brings it out strong,
And we speak, and we talk,
And we dance, and we walk,
To the notes of that popular song.

It really is driving me crazy;
I feel that I 'm wasting away;
My brain is becoming more hazy,
My appetite less every day.
But, ah! I 'd not pray for existence,
Nor struggle my life to prolong,
If, up some dark alley, with him I might dally
Who wrote that new popular song.

The bone-player clicks it,
The banjoist picks it,
It 'livens the clog-dancer's heels;
The bass-viol moans it,
The bagpiper drones it,
They play it for waltzes and reels.
I shall not mind quitting
The earthly, and flitting
Away 'mid the heavenly throng,
If the mourners who come
To my grave do not hum
That horrible popular song.

MATILDY'S BEAU

I HAIN'T no great detective, like yer read about,—the kind
That solves a whole blame murder case by footmarks left behind;
But then, again, on t' other hand, my eyes hain't shut so tight
But I can add up two and two and get the answer right;
So, when prayer-meet'ns, Friday nights, got keepin' awful late,
And, fer an hour or so, I 'd hear low voices at the gate—
And when that gate got saggin' down 'bout ha'f a foot er so—
I says ter mother: "Ma," says I, "Matildy 's got a beau."

We ought ter have expected it—she 's 'most eighteen, yer see;
But, sakes alive! she 's always seemed a baby, like, ter me;
And so, a feller after *her!* why, that jest did beat all!
But, t' other Sunday, bless yer soul, he come around ter call;

And when I see him all dressed up as dandy as yer
please,
But sort er lookin' 's if he had the shivers in his knees,
I kind er realized it then, yer might say, like a blow—
Thinks I, "No use! I 'm gittin' old; Matildy 's got a
beau."

Just twenty-four short years gone by—it do' n't seem
five, I vow!—
I fust called on Matildy—that 's Matildy's mother now;

I recollect I spent an hour a-tyin' my cravat,
And I 'd sent up ter town and bought a bang-up shiny hat.
And, my! oh, my! them new plaid pants; well, wa' n't I something grand
When I come up the walk with some fresh posies in my hand?
And did n't I feel like a fool when her young brother, Joe,
Sang out: "Gee crickets! Looky here! Here comes Matildy's beau!"

And now another feller comes up *my* walk, jest as gay,
And here 's Matildy blushin' red in jest her mother's way;
And when she says she 's got ter go an errand to the store,
We know *he* 's waitin' 'round the bend, jest as I've done afore;
Or, when they 're in the parlor and I knock, why, bless yer heart!
I have ter smile ter hear how quick their chairs are shoved apart.
They think us old folks do n't "catch on" a single but, sho!
I reckon they fergit I was Matildy's mother's beau.

"SISTER'S BEST FELLER"

My sister's best feller is 'most six-foot-three,
And handsome and strong as a feller can be;
And Sis, she 's so little, and slender, and small,
You never would think she could boss him at all;
But, my jing!
She do' n't do a thing
But make him jump 'round, like he worked with a string!
It jest makes me 'shamed of him sometimes, you know,
To think that he 'll let a girl bully him so.

He goes to walk with her and carries her muff
And coat and umbrella, and that kind of stuff;
She loads him with things that must weigh 'most a ton;
And, honest, he *likes* it,—as if it was fun!
And, oh, say!
When they go to a play,
He 'll sit in the parlor and fidget away,
And she won't come down till it 's quarter past eight,
And then she 'll scold *him* 'cause they get there so late.

He spends heaps of money a-buyin' her things,
Like candy, and flowers, and presents, and rings;
And all he 's got for 'em 's a handkerchief case—
A fussed-up concern, made of ribbons and lace;
But, my land!
He thinks it 's just grand,
"'Cause she made it," he says, "with her own little hand";
He calls her "an angel"—I heard him—and "saint,"
And "beautif'lest bein' on earth"—but she ain't.

'Fore *I* go an errand for her any time
I jest make her coax me, and give me a dime;
But that great, big silly—why, honest and true—
He 'd run forty miles if she wanted him to.
Oh, gee whiz!
I tell you what 't is!
I jest think it 's *awful*—those actions of his.
I won't fall in love, when I 'm grown—no sir-ee!
My sister's best feller 's a warnin' to me!

"THE WIDDER CLARK"

It's getting on ter winter now, the nights are crisp and chill,
The wind comes down the chimbly with a whistle sharp and shrill,
The dead leaves rasp and rustle in the corner by the shed,
And the branches scratch and rattle on the skylight overhead.
The cracklin' blaze is climbin' up around the old back-log,
As we set by the fireplace here, myself and cat and dog;
And as fer me, I'm thinkin', as the fire burns clear and bright,
That it must be mighty lonesome fer the Widder Clark ter-night.

It's bad enough fer me, b' gosh, a-pokin' round the place,
With jest these two dumb critters here, and nary human face
To make the house a home agin, same as it used ter be
While mother lived, for she was 'bout the hull wide world ter me.

My bein' all the son she had, we loved each other more—
That 's why, I guess, I 'm what they call a "bach" at forty-four.
It 's hard fer *me* to set alone, but women folks—'t ain't right,
And it must be mighty lonesome fer the Widder Clark ter-night.

I see her t' other mornin', and, I swan, 't wa' n't later 'n six,
And there she was, out in the cold, a-choppin' up the sticks
To kindle fire fer breakfast, and she smiled so bright and gay,
By gee, I simply could n't bear ter see her work that way!
Well, I went in and chopped, I guess, enough ter last a year,
And she said "Thanks," so pretty, gosh! it done me good ter hear!
She do' n't look over twenty-five, no, not a single mite;
Ah, hum! it must be lonesome fer the Widder Clark ter-night.

I sez ter her, "Our breakfasts ain't much fun fer me or you;
Seems 's if two lonesome meals might make one social one fer two."

She blushed so red that I did, too, and I got sort er
'fraid
That she was mad, and, like a fool, come home; I wish
I 'd stayed!
I 'd like ter know, now, if she thinks that Clark 's a
pretty name—
'Cause, if she do' n't, and fancies mine, we 'll make 'em
both the same.
I think I 'll go and ask her, 'cause 't would ease my
mind a sight
Ter know 't wa' n't quite so lonesome fer the Widder
Clark ter-night.

FRIDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Oh, the Friday evening meetings in the vestry, long
ago,
When the prayers were long and fervent and the
anthems staid and slow,
Where the creed was like the pewbacks, of a pattern
straight and stiff,
And the congregation took it with no doubting "but"
or "if,"
Where the girls sat, fresh and blooming, with the old
folks down before,
And the boys, who came in later, took the benches
near the door.

Oh, the Friday evening meetings, how the ransomed sinners told
Of their weary toils and trials ere they reached the blessed fold;
How we trembled when the Deacon, with a saintly relish, spoke
Of the fiery place of torment till we seemed to smell the smoke;
And we all joined in "Old Hundred" till the rafters seemed to ring
When the preacher said, "Now, brethren: Hallelujah! Let us sing."

Oh, the Friday evening meetings, and the waiting 'round about,
'Neath the lamplight, at the portal, just to see when *she* came out,
And the whispered, anxious question, and the faintly murmured "Yes,"
And the soft hand on your coat-sleeve, and the perfumed, rustling dress,—
Oh, the Paradise of Heaven somehow seemed to show its worth
When you walked home with an angel through a Paradise on earth.

Oh, the Friday evening meetings, and the happy homeward stroll,
While the moonlight softly mingled with the love-light in your soul;

Then the lingering 'neath the lattice where the roses
hung above,
And the "good-night" kiss at parting, and the whis-
pered word of love,—
Ah, they lighted Life's dark highway with a sweet and
sacred glow
From the Friday evening meetings in the vestry, long
ago.

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER

Little foot, whose lightest pat
Seems to glorify the mat,
Waving hair and picture hat,
Grace the nymphs have taught her;
Gown the pink of fit and style,
Lips that ravish when they smile,—
Like a vision, down the aisle
Comes the parson's daughter.

As she passes, like a dart
To each luckless fellow's heart
Leaps a throbbing thrill and smart,
When his eye has sought her;

Tries he then his sight to bless
With one glimpse of face or tress—
Does she know it?—well, I guess!
Parson's pretty daughter.

Leans she now upon her glove
Cheeks whose dimples tempt to love,
And, with saintly look above,
Hears her "Pa" exhort her;
But, within those upturned eyes,
Fair as sunny summer skies,
Just a hint of mischief lies,—
Parson's roguish daughter.

From their azure depths askance,
When the hymn-book gave the chance,
Did I get one laughing glance?
I was sure I caught her.
Are her thoughts so far amiss
As to stray, like mine, to bliss?
For, last night, I stole a kiss
From the parson's daughter.

MY OLD GRAY NAG

When the farm work 's done, at the set of sun,
And the supper 's cleared away,
And Ma, she sits on the porch and knits,
And Dad, he puffs his clay;
Then out I go ter the barn, yer know,
With never a word ner sign,
In the twilight dim I harness him—
That old gray nag of mine.

He 's used ter me, and he knows, yer see,
Down jest which lane ter turn;
Fact is—well, yes—he 's been, I guess,
Quite times enough ter learn;

And he knows the hedge by the brook's damp edge,
Where the twinklin' fireflies shine,
And he knows who waits by the pastur' gates—
That old gray nag of mine.

So he stops, yer see, fer he thinks, like me,
That a buggy 's made fer two;
Then along the lane, with a lazy rein,
He jogs in the shinin' dew;
And he do' n't fergit he can loaf a bit
In the shade of the birch and pine;
Oh, he knows his road, and he knows his load—
That old gray nag of mine.

No, he ain't the sort that the big-bugs sport,
Docked up in the latest style,
But he suits us two, clean through and through,
And, after a little while,
When the cash I 've saved brings the home we 've craved,
So snug, and our own design,
He 'll take us straight ter the parson's gate—
That old gray nag of mine.

THROUGH THE FOG

THE FOG was so thick yer could cut it
'Thout reachin' a foot over-side,
The dory she 'd nose up ter butt it,
And then git discouraged an' slide;
No noise but the thole-pins a-squeakin',
Or, maybe, the swash of a wave,
No feller ter cheer yer by speakin'—
'Twas lonesomer, lots, than the grave.

I set there an' thought of my trouble,
I thought how I 'd worked fer the cash
That bust and went up like a bubble
The day that the bank went ter smash.
I thought how the fishin' was failin',
How little this season I 'd made,
I thought of the child that was ailin',
I thought of the bills ter be paid.

"And," says I, "All my life I 've been fightin'
Through oceans of nothin' but fog;
And never no harbor a-sightin'—
Jest driftin' around like a log;

No matter how sharp I 'm a-spyin',
I never see nothin' ahead:
I 'm sick and disgusted with tryin'—
I jest wish ter God I was dead."

It wa' n't more 'n a minute, I 'm certain,
The words was jest out er my mouth,
When up went the fog, like a curtain,
And "puff" came the breeze from the south;
And 'bout a mile off, by rough guessin',
I see my own shanty on shore,
And Mary, my wife and my blessin',
God keep her, she stood in the door.

And I says ter myself, "I 'm a darlin';
A chap with a woman like that,
To set here a-grumblin' and snarlin',
As sour as a sulky young brat—
I 'd better jest keep my helm steady,
And not mind the fog that 's adrift,
For when the Lord gits good and ready,
I reckon it 's certain ter lift."

THE BALLADE OF THE DREAM-SHIP

My dream-ship's decks are of beaten gold,
And her fluttering banners are brave of hue,
And her shining sails are of satin fold,
And her tall sides gleam where the warm waves woo:
While the flung spray leaps in a diamond dew
From her bright bow, dipping its dance of glee;
For the skies are fair and the soft winds coo,
Where my dream-ship sails o'er the silver sea.

My dream-ship's journeys are long and bold,
And the ports she visits are far and few;
They lie by the rosy shores of old,
'Mid the dear lost scenes my boyhood knew;
Or, deep in the future's misty blue,
By the purple islands of Arcady,—
And Spain's fair turrets shine full in view,
Where my dream-ship sails o'er the silver sea.

My dream-ship's cargo is wealth untold,
Rare blooms that the old home gardens grew,
Sweet pictured faces, and loved songs trolled
By lips long laid 'neath the churchyard yew;
Or wondrous wishes not yet come true,
And fame and glory that is to be;—
Hope holds the wheel all the lone watch through,
Where my dream-ship sails o'er the silver sea.

ENVOY

Heart's dearest, what though the storms may brew,
And earth's ways darken for you and me?
The breeze is fair—let us voyage anew,
Where my dream-ship sails o'er the silver sea.

LIFE'S PATHS

It 's a wonderful world we 're in, my dear,
A wonderful world, they say,
And blest they be who may wander free
Wherever a wish may stray;
Who spread their sails to the arctic gales,
Or bask in the tropic's bowers,
While we must keep to the foot-path steep
In this workaday life of ours.

For smooth is the road for the few, my dear,
And wide are the ways they roam:
Our feet are led where the millions tread,
In the worn, old lanes of home.
And the years may flow for weal or woe,
And the frost may follow the flowers,
Our steps are bound to the self-same round
In this workaday life of ours.

But narrow our path may be, my dear,
And simple the scenes we view,
A heart like thine, and a love like mine,
Will carry us bravely through.
With a happy song we 'll trudge along,
And smile in the shine or showers,
And we 'll ease the pack on a brother's back
By this workaday life of ours.

THE MAYFLOWER

In the gleam and gloom of the April weather,
When the snows have flown in the brooklet's flood,
And the Showers and Sunshine sport together,
And the proud Bough boasts of the baby Bud;
On the hillside brown, where the dead leaves linger
In crackling layers, all crimped and curled,
She parts their folds with a timid finger,
And shyly peeps at the waking world.

The roystering West Wind flies to greet her,
And bids her haste, with a gleeful shout:
The quickening Saplings bend to meet her,
And the first green Grass-blades call, "Come out!"
So, venturing forth with a dainty neatness,
In gown of pink or in white arrayed,
She comes once more in her fresh completeness,
A modest, fair little Pilgrim Maid.

Her fragrant petals, their beauties showing,
Creep out to sprinkle the hill and dell,
Like showers of Stars in the shadows glowing,
Or Snowflakes blossoming where they fell;
And the charmed Wood leaps into joyous blooming,
As though 't were touched by a Fairy's ring,
And the glad Earth scents, in the rare perfuming,
The first sweet breath of the new-born Spring.

MAY MEMORIES

To MY office window, gray,
Come the sunbeams in their play,
Come the dancing, glancing sunbeams, airy fairies of the May;
Like a breath of summer-time,
Setting Memory's bells a-chime,
Till their jingle seems to mingle with the measure of my rhyme.

And above the tramp of feet,
And the clamor of the street,
I can hear the thrush's singing, ringing high and clear and sweet,—
Hear the murmur of the breeze
Through the bloom-starred apple trees,
And the ripples softly splashing and the dashing of the seas;

See the shadow and the shine
Where the glossy branches twine,
And the ocean's sleepy tuning mocks the crooning in the pine;
Hear the catbird whistle shrill
In the bushes by the rill,
Where the violets toss and twinkle as they sprinkle vale and hill;

Feel the tangled meadow-grass
On my bare feet as I pass;
See the clover bending over in a dew-bespangled mass;
See the cottage by the shore,
With the pansy beds before,
And the old familiar places and the faces at the door.

Oh, the skies of blissful blue,
Oh, the woodland's verdant hue,—
Oh, the lazy days of boyhood, when the world was fair and new!
Still to me your tale is told
In the summer's sunbeam's gold,
And my truant fancy straying, goes a-Maying as of old.

BIRDS'-NESTING TIME

THE spring sun flashes a rapier thrust
Through the dingy school-house pane,
A shining scimitar, free from rust,
That cuts the cloud of the drifting dust,
And scatters a golden rain;
And the boy at the battered desk within
Is dreaming a dream sublime,
For study 's a wrong, and school a sin,
When the joys of woods and fields begin,
And it 's just birds'-nesting time.

He dreams of a nook by the world unguessed,
Where the thrush's song is sung,
And the dainty yellowbird's fairy nest,
Lined with the fluff from the cattail's crest,
'Mid the juniper boughs is hung;
And further on, by the elder hedge,
Where the turtles come out to sleep,
The marsh-hen builds, by the brooklet's edge,
Her warm, wet home in the swampy sedge,
'Mid the shadows so dark and deep.

He knows of the spot by the old stone wall,
Where the sunlight dapples the glade,
And the sweet wild-cherry blooms softly fall,
And hid in the meadow-grass rank and tall,
The "Bob-white's" eggs are laid.
He knows, where the sea-breeze sobs and sings,
And the sand-hills meet the brine,
The clamorous crows, with their whirring wings,
Tell of their treasure that sways and swings
In the top of the tasselled pine.

. . . . . .

And so he dreamed, with a happy face,
Till the noontide recess came,
And when 't was over, ah, sad disgrace,
The teacher, seeing an empty place,
Marked "truant" against his name;
While he, forgetful of book or rule,
Sought only a tree to climb:
For where is the boy who remembers school
When the cowslip blows by the marshy pool,
And it 's just birds'-nesting time?

THE OLD SWORD ON THE WALL

Where the warm spring sunlight, streaming
Through the window, sets its gleaming,
With a softened silver sparkle in the dim and dusky hall,
With its tassel torn and tattered,
And its blade, deep-bruised and battered,
Like a veteran, scarred and weary, hangs the old sword on the wall.

None can tell its stirring story,
None can sing its deeds of glory,
None can say which cause it struck for, or from what limp hand it fell;
On the battle-field they found it,
Where the dead lay thick around it—
Friend and foe—a gory tangle—tossed and torn by shot and shell.

Who, I wonder, was its wearer,
Was its stricken soldier bearer?
Was he some proud Southern stripling, tall and straight and brave and true?
Dusky locks and lashes had he?
Or was he some Northern laddie,
Fresh and fair, with cheeks of roses, and with eyes and coat of blue?

From New England's fields of daisies,
Or from Dixie's bowered mazes,
Rode he proudly forth to conflict? What, I wonder, was his name?
Did some sister, wife, or mother,
Mourn a husband, son, or brother?
Did some sweetheart look with longing for a love who never came?

Fruitless question! Fate forever
Keeps its secret, answering never.
But the grim old blade shall blossom on this mild Memorial Day;
I will wreathe its hilt with roses
For the soldier who reposes
Somewhere 'neath the Southern grasses in his garb of blue or gray.

May the flowers be fair above him,
May the bright buds bend and love him,
May his sleep be deep and dreamless till the last great bugle-call;
And may North and South be nearer
To each other's heart, and dearer,
For the memory of their heroes and the old swords on the wall.

NINETY-EIGHT IN THE SHADE

Pavements a-frying in street and in square,
Never a breeze in the blistering air,
Never a place where a fellow can run
Out of the shine of the sizzling sun:
"General Humidity" having his way,
Killing us off by the hundred a day;
Mercury climbing the tube like a shot,—
Suffering Cæsar! I tell you it's hot!

Collar kerflummoxed all over my neck,
Necktie and bosom and wristbands a wreck,
Handkerchief dripping and worn to a shred
Mopping and scouring my face and my head;
Simply ablaze from my head to my feet,
Back all afire with the prickles of heat,—
Not on my cuticle one easy spot,—
Jiminy Moses! I tell you it's *hot!*

Give me a fan and a seat in the shade,
Bring me a bucket of iced lemonade;
Dress me in naught but the thinnest of clothes,
Start up the windmill and turn on the hose:
Set me afloat from my toes to my chin,
Open the ice-box and fasten me in,—
If it should freeze me, why, that matters not,—
Brimstone and blazes! I tell you it's HOT!

"Collar kerflummoxed
all over my neck."

SUMMER NIGHTS AT GRANDPA'S

Summer nights at Grandpa's—ain't they soft and still!
Just the curtains rustlin' on the window-sill,
And the wind a-blowin', warm and wet and sweet—
Smellin' like the meadows or the fields of wheat;
Just the bullfrogs pipin' in amongst the grass,
Where the water 's shinin' like a lookin'-glass;
Just a dog a-barkin' somewheres up along,
So far off his yelpin' 's like a kind of song.

Summer nights at Grandpa's—hear the crickets sing,
And the water bubblin' down beside the spring;
Hear the cattle chewin' fodder in the shed,
And an owl a-hootin' high up overhead;
Hear the "way-off noises," faint and awful far—
So mixed-up a feller do' n't know what they are—
But so sort er lazy that they seem ter keep
Sayin' over 'n' over, "Sonny, go ter sleep."

Summer nights at Grandpa's—ain't it fun ter lay
In the early mornin' when it 's gettin' day—
When the sun is risin' and it 's fresh and cool,
And you 're feelin' happy coz there ain't no school?—
When you hear the crowin' as the rooster wakes,
And you think of breakfast and the buckwheat cakes;
Sleepin' in the city 's too much fuss and noise;
Summer nights at Grandpa's are the things for boys.

GRANDFATHER'S "SUMMER SWEETS"

GRANDFATHER'S "summer sweets" are ripe,
Out on the gnarled old tree,
Out where the robin redbreasts pipe,
And buzzes the bumblebee;
Swinging high on the bending bough,
Scenting the lazy breeze,
What is the gods' ambrosia now
To apples of gold like these?

Ruddy the blush of their maiden cheeks
After the sunbeam's kiss—
Every quivering leaflet speaks,
Telling a tale of bliss;
Telling of dainties hung about,
Each in a verdant wreath,
Shimmering satin all without,
Honey and cream beneath.

Would ye haste to the banquet rare,
Taste of the feast sublime?
Brush from the brow the lines of care,
Scoff at the touch of Time?

Come in the glow of the olden days,
Come with a youthful face,
Come through the old familiar ways,
Up from the dear, old place.

Barefoot, trip through the meadow lane,
Laughing at bruise and scratch;
Come, with your hands all rich with stain
Fresh from the blackberry patch;
Come where the orchard spreads its store
And the breath of the clover greets;
Quick! they are waiting you here once more,—
Grandfather's "summer sweets."

Grandfather's "summer sweets" are ripe,
Out on the gnarled, old tree—
Out where the robin redbreasts pipe,
And buzzes the bumblebee;
Swinging high on the bending bough,
Scenting the lazy breeze,
What is the gods' ambrosia now
To apples of gold like these?

MIDSUMMER

Sun like a furnace hung up overhead,
Burnin' and blazin' and blisterin' red;
Sky like an ocean, so blue and so deep,
One little cloud-ship becalmed and asleep;
Breezes all gone and the leaves hangin' still,
Shimmer of heat on the medder and hill,—
Labor and laziness callin' to me:
"Hoe or the fishin'-pole—which 'll it be?"

There 's the old cornfield out there in the sun,
Showin' so plain that there 's work ter be done;
There 's the mean weeds with their tops all a-sprout,
Seemin' ter stump me ter come clean 'em out;
But, there 's the river, so clear and so cool,
There 's the white lilies afloat on the pool,
Scentin' the shade 'neath the old maple tree—
"Hoe or the fishin'-pole—which 'll it be?"

Dusty and dry droops the corn in the heat,
Down by the river a robin sings sweet,
Gray squirrels chatter as if they might say:
"Who 's the chump talkin' of *workin'* to-day?"
Robin's song tells how the pickerel wait
Under the lily-pads, hungry for bait;
I ought ter make for that cornfield, I know:
But, "Where 's the fishin'-pole? Hang the old hoe!"

"SEPTEMBER MORNIN'S"

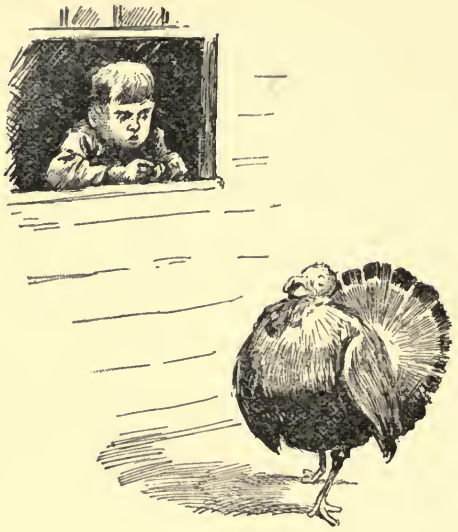
Oh, the cool September mornin's! now they 're with
us once agin,
With the grasses wet and shinin', and the air so clear
and thin,
When the cheery face of Natur' seems ter want ter let
yer know
That she 's done with lazy summer and is brimmin' full
of "go";
When yer hear the cattle callin' and the hens a-singin'
out,
And the pigeons happy cooin' as they flutter 'round
about,
And there 's snap and fire and sparkle in the way a
feller feels,
Till he fairly wants ter holler and ter jump and crack
his heels.

There 's a ringin', singin' gladness in the tunes the
blackbirds pipe
When they 're tellin' from the pear-tree that the Bart-
letts 's nigh ter ripe;

There 's a kind of jolly fatness where the Baldwin
apples shine,
And the juicy Concord clusters are a-purplin' on the
vine;
And the cornstalks, turnin' yaller and a-crinklin' up
their leaves,
Look as if they kind er hankered ter be bundled inter
sheaves;
And there 's beamin', streamin' brightness jest a-gildin'
all the place,
And yer somehow seem ter feel it in yer heart and in
yer face.

Now the crowd of cranb'r'y pickers, every mornin' as
they pass,
Makes a feller think of turkey, with the usual kind
of sass,
Till a roguish face a-smilin' 'neath a bunnit or a hat,
Makes him stop and think of somethin' that 's a good
deal sweeter 'n that;
And the lightsome girlish figger trippin', skippin' down
the lane,
Fills his mem'ry full of sunshine, but it 's sunshine
mixed with rain,—
For, yer see, it sets him dreamin' of Septembers that
he knew
When *he* went a cranb'r'y pickin' and a girl went with
him, too.

Oh, the cool September mornin's, why, their freshness seems ter roll
Like a wave of life a-liftin' up yer everlastin' soul,
And the earth and all that 's on it seems a-bustin' inter rhyme
So 's ter sing a big thanksgivin' fer the comin' harvest-time;
And I want ter jine the chorus and ter tell 'em fur and near
That I hain't got wealth nor beauty, but I 'm mighty glad I 'm here;
That I 'm getting old and wrinkled, like the husks around the corn,
But my heart is all the sweeter on a bright September morn.



NOVEMBER 'S COME

Hey, you swelled-up turkey feller!
Struttin' round so big and proud,
Pretty quick I guess your beller
Won't be goin' quite so loud.
Say, I 'd run and hide, I bet you,
And I 'd leave off eatin' some,
Else the choppin'-block 'll get you,—
Do n't you know November 's come?

Do n't you know that Grandma 's makin'
Loads of mince and pun'kin pies?
Do n't you smell those goodies cookin'?
Can 't you see 'em? Where 's your eyes?
Tell that rooster there that 's crowin',
Cute folks now are keepin' mum;
They do n't show how fat they 're growin'
When they know November 's come.

'Member when you tried ter lick me?
Yes, you did, and hurt me, too!
Thought 't was big ter chase and pick me,—
Well, I 'll soon be pickin' you.
Oh, I know you 're big and hearty,
So you need n't strut and drum,—
Better make your will out, smarty,
'Cause, you know, November 's come.

"Gobble! gobble!" oh, no matter!
Pretty quick you 'll change your tune;
You 'll be dead and in a platter,
And *I 'll* gobble pretty soon.
'F I was you I 'd stop my puffin',
And I 'd look most awful glum;—
Hope they give you lots of stuffin'!
Ain't you glad November 's come?

THE WINTER NIGHTS AT HOME

A stretch of hill and valley, swathed thick in robes
of white,
The buildings blots of blackness, the windows gems
of light,
A moon, now clear, now hidden, as in its headlong
race
The north wind drags the cloud-wrack in tatters o'er
its face;
Mailed twigs that click and clatter upon the tossing
tree,
And, like a giant's chanting, the deep voice of the sea,
As 'mid the stranded ice-cakes the bursting breakers
foam,—
The old familiar picture—a winter night at home.

The old familiar picture—the firelight rich and red,
The lamplight soft and mellow, the shadowed beams
o'erhead;
And father with his paper, and mother, calm and
sweet,
Mending the red yarn stockings stubbed through by
careless feet.

The little attic bedroom, the window 'neath the eaves,
Decked by the Frost King's brushes with silvered sprays and leaves;
The rattling sash which gossips with idle gusts that roam
About the ice-fringed gables—the winter nights at home.

What would I give to climb them—those narrow stairs so steep,—
And reach that little chamber, and sleep a boy's sweet sleep!
What would I give to view it—that old house by the sea—
Filled with the dear lost faces which made it home for me!
The sobbing wind sings softly the song of long ago,
And in that country churchyard the graves are draped in snow;
But there, beyond the arches of Heaven's star-jeweled dome,
Perhaps they know I 'm dreaming of winter nights at home.

"THE LITTLE FELLER'S STOCKIN'"

O, IT 's Christmas Eve, and moonlight, and the Christmas air is chill,
And the frosty Christmas holly shines and sparkles on the hill,
And the Christmas sleigh-bells jingle and the Christmas laughter rings,
As the last stray shoppers hurry, takin' home the Christmas things;
And up yonder in the attic there 's a little trundle bed
Where there 's Christmas dreams a-dancin' through a sleepy, curly head;
And it 's "Merry Christmas," Mary, once agin fer me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up beside the flue.

'T is n't silk, that little stockin', and it is n't much fer show,
And the darns are pretty plenty 'round about the heel and toe,
And the color 's kind er faded, and it 's sort er worn and old,
But it really is surprisin' what a lot of love 't will hold;

And the little hand that hung it by the chimney there along
Has a grip upon our heartstrings that is mighty firm and strong;
So old Santy won't fergit it, though it is n't fine and new,—
That plain little worsted stockin' hangin' up beside the flue.

And the crops may fail and leave us with our plans all knocked ter smash,
And the mortgage may hang heavy, and the bills use up the cash,
But whenever comes the season, jest so long 's we 've got a dime,
There 'll be somethin' in that stockin'—won't there, Mary?—every time.
And if in amongst our sunshine there 's a shower or two of rain,
Why, we 'll face it bravely smilin', and we 'll try not ter complain,
Long as Christmas comes and finds us here together, me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up beside the flue.

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

You know the story—it 's centuries old—
How the Ant and the Grasshopper met, we 're told,
On a blustering day, when the wind was cold
And the trees were bare and brown ;
And the Grasshopper, being a careless blade,
Who all the summer had danced and played,
Now came to the rich old Ant for aid,
And the latter "turned him down."

It 's only fancy, but I suppose
That the Grasshopper wore his summer clothes,
And stood there kicking his frozen toes
And shaking his bones apart;
And the Ant, with a sealskin coat and hat,
Commanded the Grasshopper, brusque and flat,
To "Dance through the winter," and things like that,
Which he thought were "cute" and "smart."

But, mind you, the Ant, all summer long,
Had heard the Grasshopper's merry song,
And had laughed with the rest of the happy throng
At the bubbling notes of glee;
And he said to himself, as his cash he lent,
Or started out to collect his rent,
"The shif'less fool do' n't charge a cent,—
I 'm getting the whole show free."

I 've never been told how the pair came out—
The Grasshopper starved to death, no doubt,
And the Ant grew richer, and had the gout,
As most of his brethren do;
I know that it 's better to save one's pelf,
And the Ant is considered a wise old elf,
But I like the Grasshopper more myself,-
Though that is between we two.

THE CROAKER

Once, by the edge of a pleasant pool,
Under the bank, where 't was dark and cool,
Where bushes over the water hung,
And grasses nodded and rushes swung—
Just where the brook flowed out of the bog—
There lived a gouty and mean old Frog,
Who 'd sit all day in the mud, and soak,
And do just nothing but croak and croak.

'Till a Blackbird whistled: "I say, you know,
What *is* the trouble down there below?
Are you in sorrow, or pain, or what?"
The Frog said: "Mine is a gruesome lot!
Nothing but mud, and dirt, and slime,
For me to look at the livelong time.
'Tis a dismal world!" so he sadly spoke,
And voiced his woes in a mournful croak.

"But you 're looking *down!*" the Blackbird said.
"Look at the blossoms overhead;
Look at the lovely summer skies;
Look at the bees and butterflies—

Look *up*, old fellow! Why, bless your soul,
You 're looking down in a muskrat's hole!"
But still, with his gurgling sob and choke,
The Frog continued to croak and croak.

And a wise old Turtle, who boarded near,
Said to the Blackbird: "Friend, see here:
Do n't shed your tears over him, for he
Is wretched just 'cause he likes to be!
He 's one of the kind who *won't* be glad;
It makes him happy to think he 's sad.
I'll tell you something—and it 's no joke—
Do n't waste your pity on those who croak!"

THE OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN

Oh, those sweet old-fashioned posies, that were mother's
pride and joy,
In the sunny little garden where I wandered when a
boy!
Oh, the morning-glories twining 'mongst the shining
sunflowers tall,
And the clematis a-tangle in the angle of the wall!

How the mignonette's sweet blooming was perfuming
all the walks,
Where the hollyhocks stood proudly with their blossom-
dotted stalks;
While the old-maids' pinks were nodding groups of
gossips, here and there,
And the bluebells swung so lightly in the lazy, hazy
air!

Then the sleepy poppies, stooping low their drooping,
drowsy heads,
And the modest young sweet-williams hiding in their
shady beds!
By the edges of the hedges, where the spiders' webs
were spun,
How the marigolds lay, yellow as the mellow summer
sun
That made all the grass a-dapple 'neath the leafy apple
tree,
Whence you heard the locust drumming and the hum-
ming of the bee;
While the soft breeze in the trellis, where the roses
used to grow,
Sent the silken petals flying like a scented shower of
snow!

Oh, the quaint old-fashioned garden, and the pathways
cool and sweet,
With the dewy branches splashing flashing jewels o'er
my feet!

And the dear old-fashioned blossoms, and the old home
where they grew,
And the mother-hands that plucked them, and the
mother-love I knew!
Ah, of all earth's fragrant flowers in the bowers on
her breast,
Sure the blooms which memory brings us are the
brightest and the best;
And the fairest, rarest blossoms ne'er could win my
love, I know,
Like the sweet old-fashioned posies mother tended long
ago.

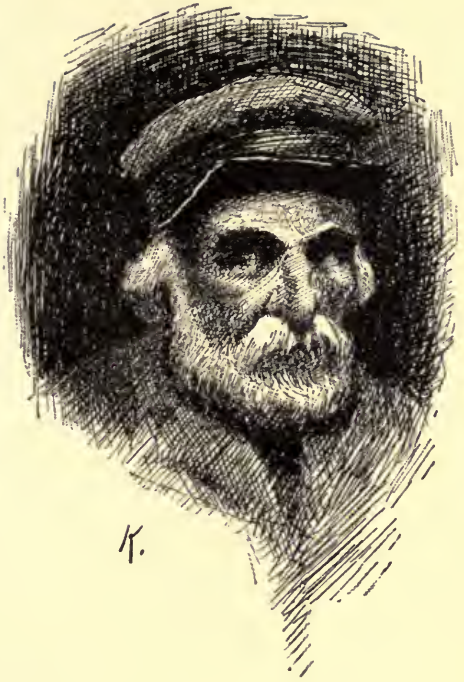
THE LIGHT-KEEPER

For years I've seen the frothy lines go thund'rin'
down the shore;
For years the surge has tossed its kelp and wrack about
my door;
I've heard the sea-wind sing its song in whispers 'round
the place,
And fought it when it flung the sand, like needles, in
my face.

I 've seen the sun-rays turn the roof ter blist'rin', tarry coal;
I 've seen the ice-drift clog the bay from foamin' shoal ter shoal;
I 've faced the winter's snow and sleet, I 've felt the summer's shower,
But every night I 've lit the lamp up yonder in the tower.

I 've seen the sunset flood the earth with streams of rosy light,
And every foot of sea-line specked with twinklin' sails of white;
I 've woke ter find the sky a mess of scud and smoky wreath,
A blind wind-devil overhead and hell let loose beneath.
And then ter watch the rollers pound on ledges, bars and rips,
And pray fer them that go, O Lord, down ter the sea in ships!
Ter see the lamp, when darkness comes, throw out its shinin' track,
And think of that one gleamin' speck in all the world of black.

And often, through a night like that, I 've waited fer the day
That broke and showed a lonesome sea, a sky all cold and gray;



"It seems ter me that's all
there is: jest do your duty right."

And, may be, on the spit below, where sea-gulls whirl
and screech,
I 've seen a somethin' stretched among the fresh weed
on the beach;
A draggled, frozen somethin', in the ocean's tangled
scum,
That meant a woman waitin' fer a man who 'd never
come;
And all the drop of comfort in my sorrer I could git
Was this: "I done my best ter save; thank God, the
lamp was lit."

And there 's lots of comfort, really, to a strugglin' mor-
tal's breast
In the sayin', if it 's truthful, of "I done my level best";
It seems ter me that 's all there is: jest do your duty
right,
No matter if yer rule a land or if yer tend a light.
My lot is humble, but I 've kept that lamp a-burnin'
clear,
And so, I reckon, when I die I 'll know which course
ter steer;
The waves may roar around me and the darkness hide
the view,
But the lights 'll mark the channel and the Lord 'll tow
me through.

THE LITTLE OLD HOUSE BY THE SHORE

It stands at the bend where the road has its end,
And the blackberries nod on the vine;
And the sun flickers down to its gables of brown,
Through the sweet-scented boughs of the pine.
The roof-tree is racked and the windows are cracked,
And the grasses grow high at the door,
But hid in my heart is an altar, apart,
To the little old house by the shore.

For its portal so bare was a Paradise rare,
With the blossoms that clustered above,
When a mother's dear face gave a charm to the place
As she sang at her labor of love.
And the breeze, as it strays through the window and plays
With the dust and the leaves on the floor,
Is a memory sweet of the pattering feet
In the little old house by the shore.

And again in my ears, through the dream of the years,
They whisper, the playmates of old,
The brother whose eyes were a glimpse of the skies,
The sister with ringlets of gold;

And Father comes late to the path at the gate,
As he did when the fishing was o'er,
And the echoes ring out, at our welcoming shout,
From the little old house by the shore.

But the night-wind has blown and the vision has flown,
And the sound of the children is still,
And the shadowy mist, like a spirit, has kissed
The graves by the church on the hill;
But softly, afar, sing the waves on the bar,
A song of the sunshine of yore:
A lullaby deep for the loved ones who sleep
Near the little old house by the shore.

WHEN THE TIDE GOES OUT

When the tide goes out, how the foam-flakes dance
Through the wiry sedge-grass near the shore;
How the ripples spark in the sunbeam's glance,
As they madly tumble the pebbles o'er!
The barnacled rocks emerging seem,
As their beards of seaweed are tossed about,
Like giants who wake from a troubled dream
And laugh for joy when the tide goes out.

When the tide goes out, how the shining sands,
Like silver, glisten, and gleam, and glow;
How the sea-gulls whirl, in their joyous bands,
O'er the shoals where the breakers come and go!
The coal-black driftwood, gleaming wet,
Relic of by-gone vessel stout,
With its clinging shells, seems a bar of jet,
Studded with pearls, when the tide goes out.

When the tide goes out, how the breezes blow
The nodding plumes of the pine-trees through;
How the far-off ships, like flakes of snow,
Are lightly sprinkled upon the blue!
The Sea, as he moves in his slow retreat,
Like a warrior struggling for each redoubt,
But with flashing lances the sand-bars meet
And drive him back, when the tide goes out.

When the tide goes out, how each limpid pool
Reflects the sky and the fleecy cloud;
How the rills, like children set free from school,
Prattle and plash and sing aloud!
The shore-birds cheerily call, the while
They dart and circle in merry rout,—
The face of the ocean seems to smile
And the earth to laugh, when the tide goes out.

When the tide goes out, as the years roll by,
And Life sweeps on to the outer bar,
And I feel the chill of the depths that lie
Beyond the shoals where the breakers are,

I will not rail at a kindly Fate,
Or welcome Age with a peevish pout,
But still, with a heart of Youth, await
The final wave, when the tide goes out.

THE WATCHERS

When the great, gray fog comes in, and the damp clouds cloak the shore,
And the tossing waves grow dim, and the white sails flash no more,
Then, over the shrouded sea, where the winding mist-wreaths creep,
The deep-voiced Watchers call, the Watchers who guard the Deep.

. . . . . .

"Hear! hear! hear! Hark to the word I bring!
Toilers upon the sea, list to the Bell-buoy's ring!
List, as I clash and clang! list, as I toss and toll!
Under me yawns the grave, under me lies the shoal
Where the whirling eddies wait to grapple the drowning crew,
And the hungry quicksand hides the bones of the ship it slew.

Swift on the outward tack! quick, to the seaward bear!
Toilers upon the sea, here is the shoal! Beware!"

"Hear! hear! hear! Hark to me, one and all!
Toilers upon the sea, list to the Fog-horn's call!
List to my buzzing cry! list, as I growl and groan:
Here is the sullen shore where the white-toothed breakers moan;
Where the silky ripples run with the wolf-like wave behind,
To leap on the struggling wreck and worry and gnaw and grind,
To toss on the cruel crag the dead with his streaming hair!
Toilers upon the sea, here are the rocks! Beware!"

"Hear! hear! hear! Hark to my stormy shriek!
Toilers upon the sea, the Whistling-buoy would speak!
List to my sobbing shout! list, for my word is brief:
Death is beneath me here! death on the sunken reef
Where the jagged ledge is hid and the slimy seaweeds grow,
And the long kelp streamers wave in the dark green depths below,
Where, under the shell-clad hulk, the gaunt shark makes his lair,—
Toilers upon the sea, here is the reef! Beware!"

. . . . . .

And then, o'er the silent sea, an answer from unseen lips,
Comes in through the great, gray fog, the word from the mist-bound ships,—
A chorus of bell and horn, faint and afar and clear,—
"Thanks, O Guard of the Deep! Watchers, we hear! we hear!"

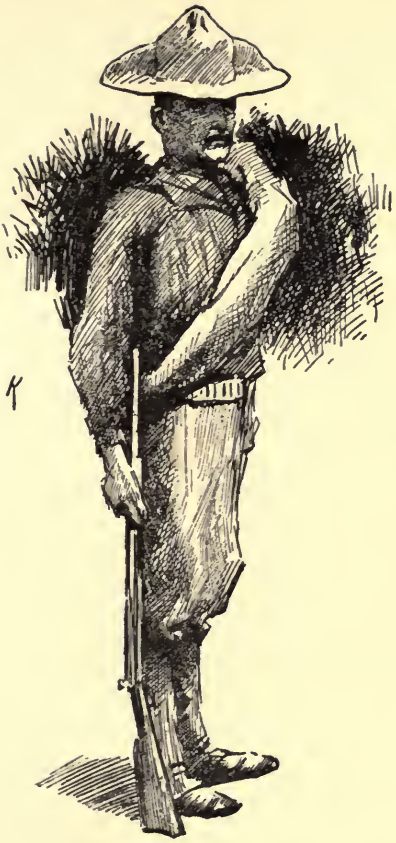
"THE REG'LAR ARMY MAN"

He ain't no gold-laced "Belvidere,"
Ter sparkle in the sun;
He do'n't parade with gay cockade,
And posies in his gun;
He ain't no "pretty soldier boy,"
So lovely, spick and span,—
He wears a crust of tan and dust,
The Reg'lar Army man;
The marchin', parchin',
Pipe-clay starchin',
Reg'lar Army man.

He ain't at home in Sunday-school,
Nor yet a social tea,
And on the day he gets his pay
He 's apt to spend it free;
He ain't no temp'rance advocate,
He likes ter fill the "can,"
He 's kind er rough, and maybe, tough,
The Reg'lar Army man;
The r'arin', tearin',
Sometimes swearin',
Reg'lar Army man.

No State 'll call him "noble son,"
He ain't no ladies' pet,
But, let a row start anyhow,
They 'll send for him, you bet!
He "do'n't cut any ice" at all
In Fash'n's social plan,—
He gits the job ter face a mob,
The Reg'lar Army man;
The millin', drillin',
Made fer killin',
Reg'lar Army man.

They ain't no tears shed over him
When he goes off ter war,
He gits no speech nor prayerful "preach"
From mayor or governor;
He packs his little knapsack up



"They ain't no tears shed over him
When he goes off ter war."

And trots off in the van,
Ter start the fight and start it right,
The Reg'lar Army man;
The rattlin', battlin',
Colt or Gatlin',
Reg'lar Army man.

He makes no fuss about the job,
He do'n't talk big or brave,—
He knows he's in ter fight and win,
Or help fill up a grave;
He ain't no "Mama's darlin'," but
He does the best he can,
And he's the chap that wins the scrap,
The Reg'lar Army man;
The dandy, handy,
Cool and sandy,
Reg'lar Army man.

FIREMAN O'RAFFERTY

A CLOUD of cinder-dotted smoke, whose billows rise
and swell,
Thrust through by seething swords of flame that roar
like blasts from hell;
A floor whose charring timbers groan and creak beneath
the tread,
With starting planks that, gaping, show long lines of
sullen red;
Great, hissing, scalding jets of steam that, lifting now,
disclose
A crouching figure gripping tight the nozzle of a hose,
The dripping, rubber-coated form, scarce seen amid
the murk,
Of Fireman Mike O'Rafferty attending to his work.

Pressed close against the blistered floor, he strives the
fire to drown,
And slowly, surely, steadfastly, he fights the demon
down;
And then he seeks the window-frame, all sashless, blank
and bare,
And wipes his plucky Irish face and gasps a bit for air;

Then, standing on the slimy ledge, as narrow as his feet,
He hums a tune, and looks straight down six stories
to the street;
Far, far below he sees the crowd's pale faces flush and
fade,
But Fireman Mike O'Rafferty can 't stop to be afraid.

Sometimes he climbs long ladders, through a fiery,
burning rain
To reach a pallid face that glares behind a crackling
pane;
Sometimes he feels his foothold shake with giddy swing
and sway,
And barely leaps to safety as the crashing roof gives
way;
Sometimes, penned in and stifling fast, he waits, with
courage grim,
And hears the willing axes ply that strive to rescue
him;
But sometime, somewhere, somehow, help may come a
bit too late
For Fireman Mike O'Rafferty of Engine Twenty-eight.

And then the morning paper may have half a column
filled
With, "Fire at Bullion's Warehouse," and the line, "A
Fireman Killed";
And, in a neat, cheap tenement, a wife may mourn her
dead,
And all the small O'Raffertys go fatherless to bed.

And he 'll not be a hero, for, you see, he did n't fall
On some blood-spattered battle-field, slain by a rifle-ball;
But, maybe, on the other side, on God's great roll of fame,
Plain Fireman Mike O'Rafferty 'll be counted just the same.

LITTLE BARE FEET

Little bare feet, sunburned and brown,
Patterin', patterin' up and down,
Dancin' over the kitchen floor,
Light as the foam-flakes on the shore,—
Right on the go from morn till late,
From the garden path ter the old front gate,—
There hain't no music ter me so sweet
As the patterin' sound of them little bare feet.

When I mend my nets by the foamin' sea,
Them little bare feet trot there with me,
And a shrill little voice I love 'll say:
"Dran'pa, spin me a yarn ter-day."

And I know when my dory comes ter land,
There 's a spry little form somewheres on hand;
And the very fust sound my ears 'll meet
Is the welcomin' run of them little bare feet.

Oh, little bare feet! how deep you 've pressed
Yer prints of love in my worn old breast!
And I sometimes think, when I come ter die,
'Twill be lonesome-like in the by and by;
That up in Heaven I 'll long ter hear
That little child's voice, so sweet and clear;
That even there, on the golden street,
I 'll miss the pat of them little bare feet.

A RAINY DAY

Kind er *like* a stormy day, take it all together,—
Do n't believe I 'd want it jest only pleasant weather;
If the sky was allers blue, guess I 'd be complainin',
And a-pesterin' around, wishin' it was rainin'.

Like a stormy mornin' now, with the water dashin'
From the eaves and from the spouts, foamin' and
a-splashin',

With the leaves and twigs around, shinin' wet and drippin',
Shakin' in the wind with drops every-which-way skippin'.

Like ter see the gusts of rain, where there 's naught ter hinder,
Sail acrost the fields and come "spat" against the winder,
Streakin' down along the panes, floodin' sills and ledges,
Makin' little fountains, like, in the sash's edges.

Like ter see the brooks and ponds dimpled up all over,
Like ter see the di'mon's shine on the bendin' clover,
Like ter see the happy ducks in the puddles sailin',
And the stuck-up rooster all draggled, wet and trailin'.

But I like it best inside, with the fire a-gleamin',
And myself, with chores all done, settin' round and dreamin',
With the kitten on my knee, and the kettle hummin',
And the rain-drops on the roof, "Home, Sweet Home" a-drummin'.

Kind er *like* a stormy day, take it all together,
Don't believe I'd want it jest only pleasant weather;
If the sky was allers blue, guess I'd be complainin',
And a-pesterin' around, wishin' it was rainin'.

THE HAND-ORGAN BALL

When Twilight her soft robe of shadow spreads down,
And hushed is the roar and the din,
When Evening is cooling the sweltering town,
'Tis then that the frolics begin;
And up in dim "Finnegan's Court," on the pavement,
Shut in by the loom of the tenement's wall,
'Neath the swinging arc-light, on a warm summer's night,
They gather to dance at the hand-organ ball.

'Tis not a society function, you see,
But quite an informal affair;
The costumes are varied, yet simple and free,
And gems are exceedingly rare;
The ladies are gowned in their calicoes, fetching,
And coatless and cool are the gentlemen, all.
In a jacket, they say, one's not rated *au fait*
By the finicky guests at the hand-organ ball.

There's "Ikey," the newsboy, and "Muggsy" who "shines";
There's Beppo who peddles "banan'";
There's A. Lincoln Johnson, whose "Pa" kalsomines—
His skin has a very deep tan;

There 's Rosy, the cash-girl, and Mame, who ties bundles,
And Maggie, who works in the factory, tall;
She 's much in demand, for she "pivots so grand,"
She 's really the belle of the hand-organ ball.

Professor Spaghetti the music supplies,
From his hurdy-gurdy the waltz is sublime;
His fair daughter Rosa, whose tambourine flies,
Is merrily thumping the rollicking time;
The Widow McCann pats the tune with her slipper,
The peanut-man hums as he peers from his stall,
And Officer Quinn for a moment looks in
To see the new steps at the hand-organ ball.

The concert-hall tune echoes down the dark street,
The mothers lean out from the windows to see,
While soft sounds the pat of the dancers' bare feet,
And tenement babies crow loud in their glee;
And labor-worn fathers are laughing and chatting,—
Forgot for an hour is grim poverty's thrall;—
There 's joy here to-night, 'neath the swinging arc-light,
In "Finnegan's Court," at the hand-organ ball.

"JIM"

WANT to see me, hey, old chap?
Want to curl up in my lap,
Do yer, Jim?
See him sit and purr and blink—
Don't yer bet he knows I think
Lots of him?

Little kitten, nothin' more,
When we found him at the door,
In the cold,
And the baby, half undressed,
Picked him up, and he was jest
All she'd hold.

Put him up fer me to see,
And she says, so 'cute, says she,
"Baby's cat."
And we never had the heart
Fer to keep them two apart
After that.

Seem 's if I *must* hear the beat
Of her toddlin' little feet
'Round about;
Seem to see her tucked in bed,
With the kitten's furry head
Peekin' out.

Seem 's if I could hear her say,
In the cunnin' baby way
That she had:
"Say 'dood-night' to Jimmie, do.
'Coz if 'oo fordetted to
He 'd feel bad."

Miss her dreadful, do n't we, boy?
Day do' n't seem to bring no joy
With the dawn;
Look 's if night was everywhere,—
But there 's glory over there
Where she 's gone.

Seems as if my heart would break,
But I love yer for her sake,
Don't I, Jim?
See him sit and purr and blink,
Don't yer bet he knows I think
Lots of him?

IN MOTHER'S ROOM

In Mother's room still stands the chair
Beside the sunny window, where
The flowers she loved now lightly stir
In April's breeze, as though they were
Forlorn without her loving care.

Her books, her work-box, all are there,
And still the snowy curtains bear
The soft, sweet scent of lavender
In Mother's room.

Oh, spot so cool, and fresh, and fair,
Where dwelt a soul so pure and rare,
On me your fragrant peace confer,
Make my life sweet with thoughts of her,
As lavender makes sweet the air
In Mother's room.

SUNSET-LAND

Climb to my knee, little boy, little boy,—
If you look, as the sun sinks low,
Where the cloud-hills rise in the western skies,
Each one with its crest aglow,
O'er the rosy sea, where the purple isles
Have beaches of golden sand,
To the fleecy height of the great cloud, white,
You may catch a gleam of the twinkling light
At the harbor of Sunset-land.

It 's a wonderful place, little boy, little boy,
And its city is Sugarplum Town,
Where the slightest breeze through the candy trees
Will tumble the bon-bons down ;
Where the fountains sprinkle their lemonade
In syrupy, cooling streams ;
And they pave each street with a goody, sweet,
And mark them off in a manner neat,
With borders of chocolate creams.

It 's a children's town, little boy, little boy,
With a great big jail, you know,
Where "grown-ups" stay who are heard to say,
"Now don't!" or "You must n't do so."

And half of the time it is Fourth of July,
And 't is Christmas all the rest,
With plenty of toys that will make a noise,
For Santa is king of this realm of joys,
And knows what a lad likes best.

Shall I tell you the way, little boy, little boy,
To get to this country, bright?
When you 're snug in bed, and your prayers are said,
You must shut up your eyelids tight;
And wait till the sleepy old Sandman comes
And gives you his kindly hand,
And then you 'll float in a drowsy boat,
O'er the sea of rose to the cloud, remote,
And the wonderful Sunset-land.

THE SURF ALONG THE SHORE

Ye CHILDREN of the mountain, sing of your craggy peaks,
Your valleys forest laden, your cliffs where Echo speaks;
And ye, who by the prairies your childhood's joys have seen,
Sing of your waving grasses, your velvet miles of green:

But when my memory wanders down to the dear old
home
I hear, amid my dreaming, the seething of the foam,
The wet wind through the pine trees, the sobbing crash
and roar,
The mighty surge and thunder of the surf along the
shore.

I see upon the sand-dunes the beach-grass sway and
swing,
I see the whirling sea-birds sweep by on graceful
wing,
I see the silver breakers leap high on shoal and bar,
And hear the bell-buoy tolling his lonely note afar.
The green salt-meadows fling me their salty, sweet
perfume,
I hear, through miles of dimness, the watchful fog-horn
boom;
Once more, beneath the blackness of night's great roof-
tree high,
The wild geese chant their marches athwart the arch-
ing sky.

The dear old Cape! I love it! I love its hills of sand,
The sea-wind singing o'er it, the seaweed on its strand;
The bright blue ocean 'round it, the clear blue sky
o'erhead;
The fishing boats, the dripping nets, the white sails
filled and spread;—

For each heart has its picture, and each its own home song,
The sights and sounds which move it when Youth's fair memories throng;
And when, down dreamland pathways, a boy, I stroll once more,
I hear the mighty music of the surf along the shore.

AT EVENTIDE

The tired breezes are tucked to rest
In the cloud-beds far away;
The waves are pressed to the placid breast
Of the dreaming, gleaming bay;
The shore line swims in a hazy heat,
Asleep in the sea and sky,
And the muffled beat where the breakers meet
Is a soft, sweet lullaby.

The pine-clad hill has a crimson crown
Of glittering sunset glows;
The roofs of brown in the distant town
Are bathed in a blush of rose;

The radiant ripples shine and shift
In shimmering shreds of gold;
The seaweeds lift and drowse and drift,
And the jellies fill and fold.

The great sun sinks, and the gray fog heaps
His cloak on the silent sea;
The night-wind creeps where the ocean sleeps,
And the wavelets wake in glee;
Across the bay, like a silver star,
There twinkles the harbor-light,
And faint and far from the outer bar
The sea-birds call "Good-night."

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THE END

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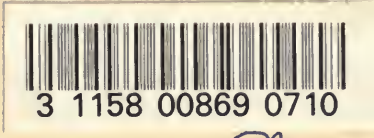

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